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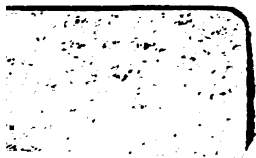


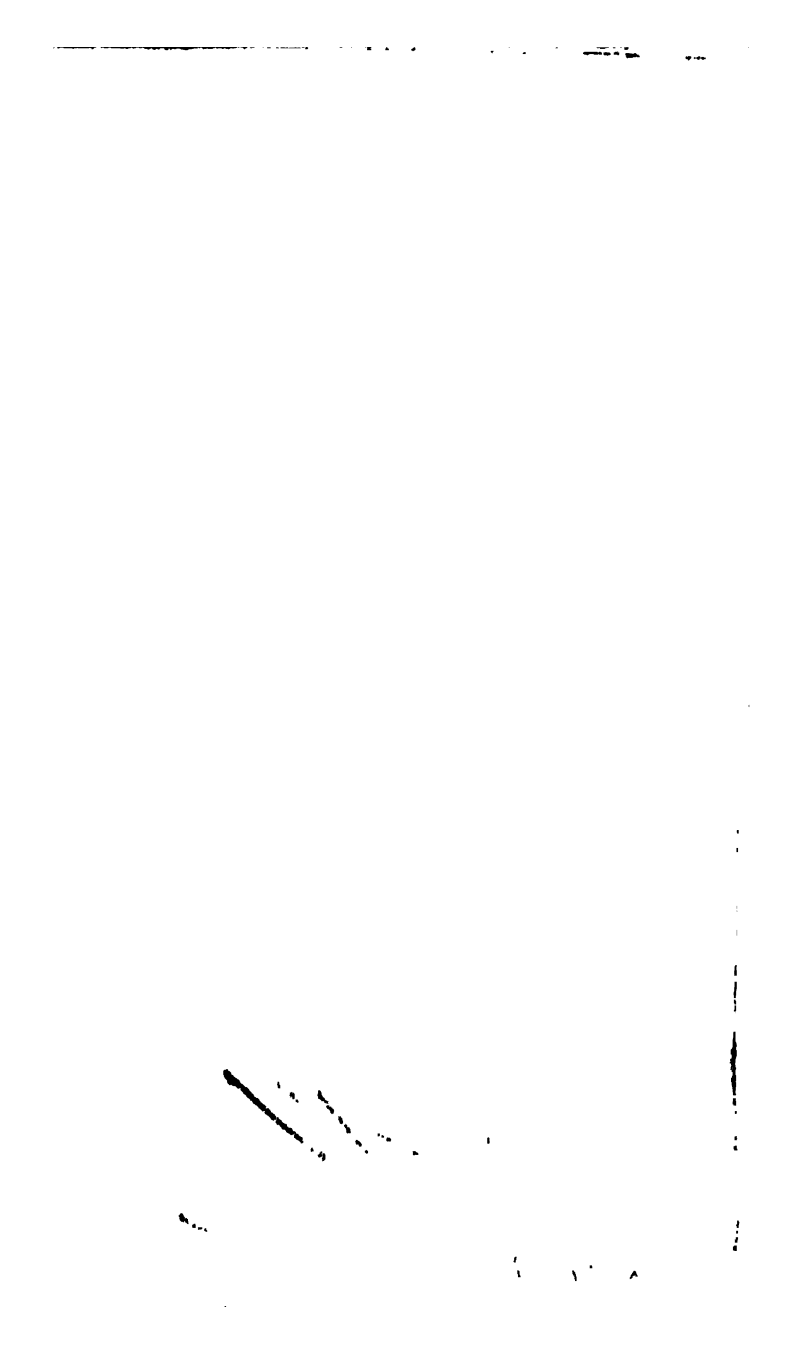
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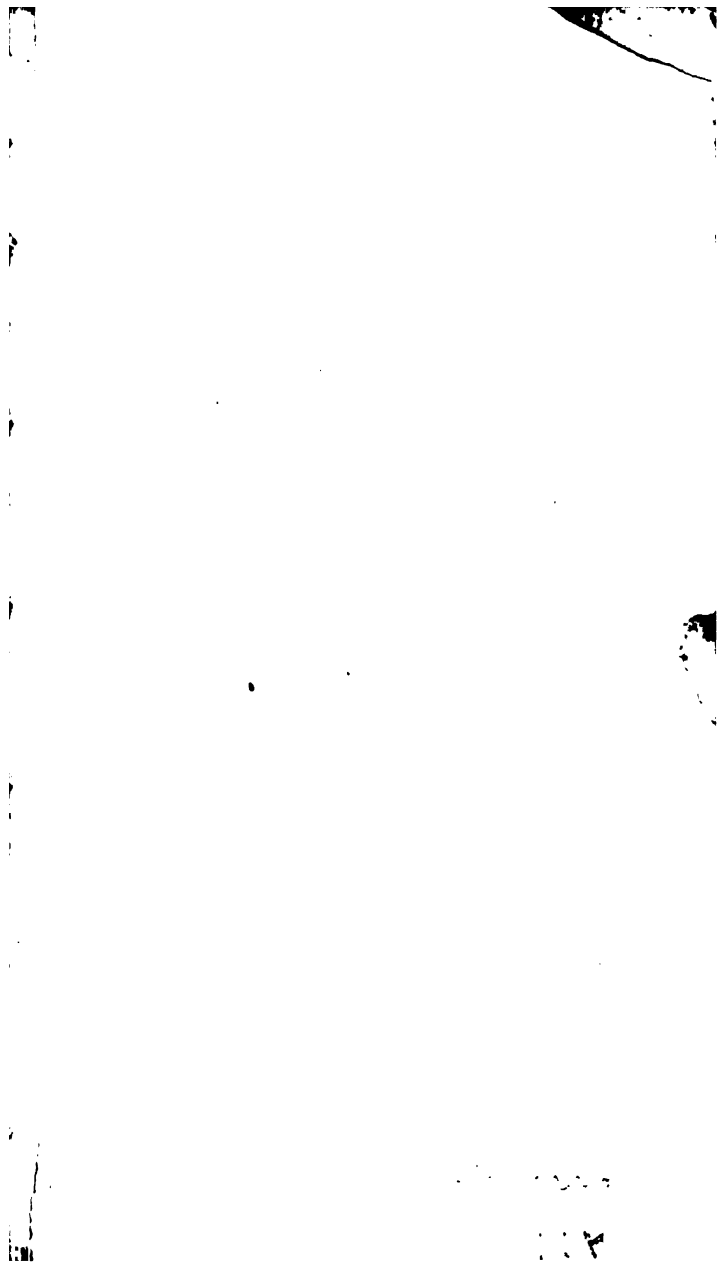


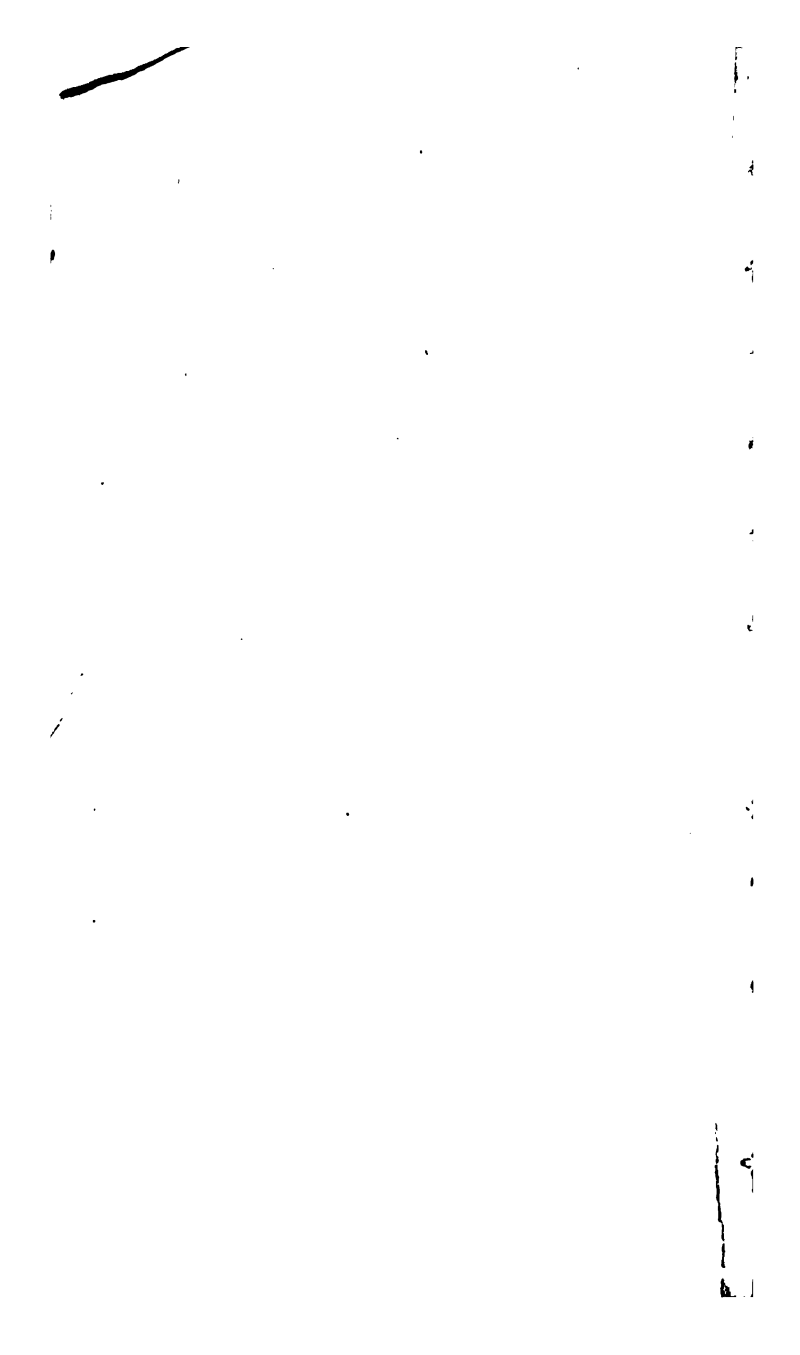


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Frances — THE *Marshall*

COMIC ROMANCE

OF

MONSIEUR SCARRON,

TRANSLATED BY

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. I.

L O N D O N:

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THE

T H E

COMIC ROMANCE.

C H A P. I.

The arrival of a strolling company at the town of Mans.

TH E fun had already performed more than half his course, and having reached the declivity of the heavens, was hastening, with his usual velocity, to his nightly goal : in plain English, it was betwixt five and six of the clock, when a cart drove into the market-place of Mans. It was drawn by two yoke of very sorry oxen led by a breeding-mare, that had a colt, which skipped to and fro around the cart like a foolish silly animal as it was. On the top of a sort of pyramid, composed of trunks, portmanteaus, and great packs of painted scenes, with which the cart was filled, appeared a
B. damsel,

damfel, dress half city, half country fashion. By the side of the cart walked a young man as poor in cloaths, as rich in mein. He wore a patch on his face, of so enormous a size, that it quite eclipsed one eye, and half of one cheek; and carried on his shoulder a long fowling-piece, which had been the death of crows, jays, and magpies, without number. These strung together served all the purposes of a bandileer, at the bottom of which hung by the feet a hen and a goose, as a trophy of victory over the plundered enemy. Instead of a hat, he wore a night-cap, which, being tyed round his head with garters of different colours, resembled an imperfect unfinished turban; and I make no doubt that it was originally intended for such. His doublet, a coat of brown frize, was bound with a leather thong, which served to support a rapier, and which, by reason of its prodigious length, could not be conveniently or dextrously used without such a support. His breeches were tucked up to above the middle of his thighs, in the same manner as those of our players, when they personate some ancient hero; and his buskins, which supplied the place of shoes, were bespattered with dirt to the very ankles.

incles. By his side walked an old man in a more decent and regular, though very ordinary, habit. He carried on his shoulders a bass-viol; and as he stooped a little in walking, he might have been taken, at a distance, for a large tortoise walking on its hinder legs. Some grumbling critic may, perhaps, cavil at the comparison, from the vast disproportion betwixt that animal and a man; but, besides that I speak here of the large tortoises which are found in India, I would have the critics know, that I use the simile on my own authority. To return from this digression, our strolling company (for such it was) had now proceeded as far as the Tennis-court at the sign of the Stag, before which some of the most jolly burghers in Mans were then assembled. The noise of the mob who had gathered round the cart, joined to the novelty of the equipage, soon drew upon our strangers the eyes of the honourable assembly. After surveying them for some time with considerable attention, an under-sheriff, la Rappinierre by name, bolder than the rest, stepped forth, and making up to them, demanded, with an air of magisterial authority, who they were. The young man, whom I described

above, without offering to pull off his turban (which, indeed, it was impossible for him to do, as with one hand he held his gun, and with the other the hilt of his sword, that it might not beat against his legs) answered him, that they were Frenchmen by birth, and players by profession; that his stage name was Destiny, his old comrade's Rancour: and that the gentlewoman, who sat roosting like a hen on the top of their baggage, was called Cave. The oddity of the name setting some of the company a laughing, gave Destiny occasion to observe that there was nothing so very strange or ridiculous in the name of Cave neither, any more than in those of Pit, Fox, Legge, Pott, or Hill; which, being common names, are repeated an hundred times a day, without exciting any tendency to laughter. He was proceeding in his edifying harangue, when a confused noise, in which, however, blows and oaths could be distinctly heard, drew the attention of the company to the quarter from whence it proceeded. The oxen and mare, it seems, being hungry after their long journey, had made free with a truss of hay which lay before the door: which the servant of the tennis-court observing, had amply resented on
the

the person of the poor carter, whom he belaboured most unmercifully, without telling him why or wherefore. The company, however, interposing, tranquillity was again established; and the mistress of the tennis-court, who loved a play much better than her devotions, through unheard-of generosity, in a woman of her profession, bid the carter let his cattle eat their bellies full. The carter, who had no objections to such an offer of kindness, embraced it without delay; and, whilst the beasts were feeding, the author too rested a while, and bethought himself what to say in the next chapter.

C H A P. II.

In which the Reader and la Rappiniere become better acquainted.

KNOW, courteous reader, for to you I address myself, that, in different parts of this kingdom is found a numerous species of animals called wits or drolls. Few towns of any note want one; and as to Paris, it has one for every ward. Know further, that I myself might have had that honour conferred upon me

by the ward to which I belong, but I declined it; for I have long since renounced this world, and all its foolish vanities.— But this by the way. La Rappiniere, who, it seems, was the wit or droll of Mans, took the first opportunity of renewing the conversation which the late squabble had interrupted, by asking the young stroller, whether their company consisted only of Miss Cave, Mr. Rancour, and himself? No such matter, rejoined Destiny. The prince of Orange's, or the duke of Epernon's company, is not more compleat than ours. Why, Sir, we were at Tours, and met with prodigious success there, when, as ill-luck would have it, our rattle-pated door-keeper happened to kill one of the fuzileers of the intendant of the province: we were obliged to save ourselves by a speedy retreat, and in the miserable ludicrous plight you see us. Ay, those fuzileers of the intendants have been as troublesome to you strollers at la Fleche, said M. la Rappiniere. O! the Murrain seize them, exclaimed the mistress of the Tennis-court, with some emotion. I warrant you now, we should have no plays, if they could help it. Here Rancour struck in—If they could!— In spite of their teeth, had we but the
keys

keys of our trunks we might entertain the town for a matter of four or five days before we join the company at Alencon, and set the devil and them at defiance. An answer so well calculated to excite attention in the by-standers could not fail. Whilst they were lost in expectation, la Rappiniere, thinking it adviseable to strike the iron while it was hot, told Rancour, that, as they could not conveniently get at their stage cloaths, they must make a shift to do without them; adding, that, if Miss Cave would accept of the use of an old gown of his wife's, it was heartily at her service. Struck with the generous offer, the good-natured mistress of the Tennis-court (so powerful is example) made a like offer to Rancour and Destiny of two or three suits of cloaths, which had been left with her in pawn: and now preliminaries were on the point of being finally adjusted, when, to the great surprize of all present, one of the by-standers, very archly as he thought, observed, that they were all this time reckoning without their host; for, continued he, addressing himself to Rancour, there are but three of you, a number certainly insufficient for the performance of any play whatever. You happen to be a

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little out there, replied Rancour, interrupting him, for I once acted, a whole play myself——yes, sir, I personated the king, the queen and the ambassador. And how do you think I could do this? why, by adapting my voice to the character, that's all; ay, ay, the management of the voice and the tones is the great secret. For instance, now I made use of a false treble-tone for the queen, spoke through the nose for the ambassador, addressing myself at the same time to the crown which I placed upon a chair; and as for the king, I fairly resumed my seat, my crown, and my gravity, and lowered the key of my voice to a bass. Now, to convince you of this, gentlemen, turning to the company, do but satisfy our carter, defray our expences at the inn, and provide us what cloaths you can conveniently spare, and we will engage to act before night; or, if you do not relish the proposal, we must beg leave to go to drink, or rest ourselves; for we really stand in need of refreshment, having come a great way, and in no small hurry. The stroler's proposal being readily embraced, the devil, or la Rappiniere his agent, whose talent for mischief could brook no longer delay, moved that Rancour and Destiny, in
order

order to hasten the entertainment, should make use of the cloaths of two young men of the town, who were then playing a set at the tennis-court; and as for Mrs. Cave, continued he, her ordinary dress will answer the purpose; and the audience, I make no doubt, will be kind enough to make proper allowances for any improprieties in that respect. This motion, in which it was impossible to discern the cloven-foot, was as readily agreed to, and the strolers, after drinking a few glasses a-piece, possibly to assist their memory, and inspire them with courage, retired to dress. The audience, in the mean time, becoming numerous, had taken their places in a garret, or upper room; where, after waiting some minutes with impatience, a dirty cloth, instead of a curtain, was drawn up, which discovered Destiny with a basket on his head instead of a crown, lying on a quilt, rubbing his eyes, as if newly awoke, and mouth-ing in the tone of a celebrated actor, the part of Herod, in the tragedy of Mariamne.

Tho' much of the force of Destiny's looks was lost in the huge patch which almost covered one half of his face, yet his merit did not pass unobserved or un-

applauded. Mr. Cave performed wonders in the parts of Mariamne and Salome; and Rancour, like another Proteus, went through the remaining characters of the piece, with universal applause. The play was now drawing to a conclusion, and the most perfect harmony subsisted between the audience and the actors, when an adventure happened that quite unhing'd the public tranquility, and had well nigh rendered the catastrophe more tragical than either the despair of Herod, or the death of Mariamne. What that adventure was, thou, reader, knowest not; for how shouldst thou, seeing it is much if the author himself knows? Suffice it for thee, at present, to be assured that cuffs, kicks, oaths, and boxes on the ear, make a capital part of it; and, to crown the whole, an indictment and information, taken out by la Rappiniere, the most skilful of all men in such matters.

CHAP.

ROMANCE.

CHAP. III.

*Containing a battle, inferior to none in
Homer, or Don Quixote,*

BEFORE I proceed to the bloody business of this chapter, the indulgent reader will permit me to say a word or two about tennis-courts, which are so common in the petty towns of this kingdom. A tennis-court, then, is a place of public resort for all the bullies, pickpockets, cheats and scoundrels in the neighbourhood; the manners are such as might be expected from so hopeful and motley a society; and as to conversation it is restricted to three topics; ribaldry, blasphemy, and scandal; which are no where to be found in such genuine purity and perfection. 'Twas, if I mistake not, in a garret or upper room, belonging to one of these tennis-courts, that I lately left our three strolers performing the tragedy of Mariamne, with universal applause, to a croured and elegant audience, with la Rappiniere, the under-sheriff, at their head. Hitherto all was well, when, in the midst of a most interesting scene between Hired and Mariamne, who

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should

should enter the room, in their drawers, with each his raquet in his hand, but the two identical young men, with whose cloaths Rancour and Destiny, at the instigation of la Rappimiere, had made so free. They had just finished their set at tennis, and, being impatient to see the play, had neglected to get themselves rubbed. In this pickle then they entered the room, where they were hardly seated, till they perceived that Herod and Pherores had their cloaths on. Blast you for a useless son of a bitch, exclaimed the most passionate of the two, addressing himself to the waiter of the tennis-court, what the devil could make you give my cloaths to that mountebank? The vociferation and furious tone with which this interrogation was accompanied, almost petrefied the poor waiter, who knew well enough what a devil of a fellow he had to deal with. Recollecting, however, the danger of delaying to give a peremptory answer, he replied with great submission, that indeed he had no hand in it; who then, rascal? continued the incensed bully. The poor fellow, not daring to accuse the author of all this mischief, before his face, stood mute, expecting every moment a sound drubbing for his delicacy;

delicacy; when his fears were instantly dispelled by the matchless impudence of la Rappiniere, who, rising from his seat, cried out, "'twas I; and what have you to say to that?" You are a damn'd eternal scoundrel, replied the other, and I will break your head for your impudence. So saying, he let fall his raquet, which he had suspended for that purpose, with prodigious violence, on the head and shoulders of the under-sheriff; who stood motionless, whether stunned with the force of the blow, or surprised that he, who, in all quarrels, had ever been the aggressor, should be out-done at his own weapons, or, perhaps, not inclined to hazard a battle, upon a slight provocation, I will not positively determine. However, to say the truth, I lean towards the last opinion; for M. la Rappiniere was one of those prudent men who never strike when the odds are manifestly against them. But, without enquiring into causes, which we can, at best, but conjecture, so it was that he stood motionless; and motionless he might have continued to this very hour, and thereby deprived the reader of much laughter and entertainment, had not his man, who, at this juncture, happened to be somewhat more irascible than the master,

master, rushed, with an honest indignation, upon the aggressor, and, dealing his blows very liberally about him, imprinted visible marks of his fury on the face, neck, and hands of his unequal antagonist. La Rappiniere was by this time recovered from his fit of amazement; and finding himself so powerfully reinforced, thought it incumbent upon him to resent the late provocation, which now appeared greater in proportion as the danger grew less. In this laudable resolution, he charged the enemy with indefatigable briskness in the rear; whilst his man exhibited such surprising feats of valour in the front. And now victory, which had long remained doubtful, was on the point of declaring itself for the allied party, when a sudden reinforcement, received by the enemy, changed for a moment the face of affairs, and restored the ballance which a superiority of numbers had contributed to destroy. So much for the sublime. Now for the familiar. Whilst la Rappiniere was exercising his manhood on the back parts of his prostrate adversary, a relation of the latter, highly resenting the indignity offered to his friend, flew at the secure, unguarded under-sheriff, tore him down, and was ready to sacrifice him to his

his just indignation, when, lo! such is the fortune of war! his own heels were tripped up, and the destruction he meditated for another fell with double vengeance upon himself. The action becoming general, the audience divided into parties; each individual espoused one side or another; and our two strolers, Rancour, and Destiny, having, by this time, joined the company, exhibited as pregnant marks of genius in their real, as formerly in their assumed characters. And now nothing but noise and confusion prevailed; some swore, others scolded, all beat and kicked; and, to add to the horror of the scene, the mistress of the tennis-court, who saw her goods broken to pieces, was ready to pierce the air with her lamentable cries. Our combatants were now in the very heat of action, and stools, chairs, and other missile weapons, were performing dreadful havoc on both sides, when, luckily for those who had no desire to be murdered outright, in came the right honourable the seneschal of Mayne, attended by some of the worshipful magistrates of the town of Mans. They had been walking in the piazza of the market-place, when a confused noise of blows, cries and oaths, which just then assailed
their

their ears, giving them reason to apprehend a breach of the peace, they ran with all speed to the place of action. Among other proposals for restoring the peace, it was moved by some of their honours that two or three pailfulls of water thrown on the combatants would have the desired success; and the opposition between the coldness of the water, and the excessive heat of these turbulent spirits was strongly insisted on; but this remedy, which, to say the truth, bade fair for success, it was not found unnecessary to apply; the warriors at length giving over, not from any inclination for peace, but an utter inability of continuing the war. The total suspension of hostilities which ensued, was owing, in a great measure, to the good offices of two charitable capuchins, who, thrusting themselves between the contending parties, had procured a cessation of arms, till an eclaireissement and mutual accommodation should take place. With whatever seeming reluctance this amiable proposal of the peace-making capuchins was received, I am inclined to believe that our combatants would have been glad an hour before of so decent a pretence of being off; for, in fact, they were heartily tired of one another. The truce thus established,

established, a negociation was set on foot; which, however, did not hinder informations to be taken on both sides, previous to a trial in due course of law.

And now that the battle is over, it remains to do justice to the merit of Destiny, one of the strollers, whose prowess and wonderful skill in boxing are celebrated at this day in the town and environs of Mans, from the faithful account delivered by the two young men that begun the fray, whom he almost cuffed to death; as well as the concurring testimonies of many others of the enemy, whom he disabled with the first blow. His patch falling off in the scuffle, people remarked that his face was as fine as his shape was handsome; mean while, to the horrid din and clamour of war succeeded the milder notes of peace; and after some time spent in repairing the ravages committed on the persons and cloaths of the combatants, there remained nothing of the late obstinate engagement, but a spiteful grin; which appearing in the faces of both parties, would have of itself pointed out to a stranger, the actors in that bloody scene. It was late before la Rappiniere and the strollers left the inn. In their way to the market-place, as that gallant magistrate was displaying
his

his usual eloquence on the perilous adventure in which they had been engaged; they found themselves surrounded by seven or eight bullies, with swords in their hands. The frightened sheriff was like to drop with fear, and no wonder, for a thrust aimed at him by one of the villains, was just about to take its effect, when the hero Destiny generously interposing, warded off the blow, at the expence of a slight wound, which, in spite of his agility, he received in the arm. His ardour nothing diminished by a paltry accident, he drew his rapier, and in the twinkling of an eye, beat two swords out of the hands of the enemy, broke two or three skulls, flashed as many faces, and, in a word, made such havoc among the gentlemen of the ambuscade, that, to the immortal honour of this strolling comedian, it was unanimously confessed, by a numerous crowd of spectators, that they never had seen so valiant a champion.

The reader, whose curiosity is ever laudable, will, no doubt, be desirous to know the cause of the bloody intentions of these bullies against la Rappiniere and his company. The fellow who had begun the late fray in the tennis-court, had given a particular account of the bloody

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engagement to his brother-in-law and an apothecary of his friends, upon his return home. In the relation la Rappiniere was not forgot; and as he assured them that he was still at the tennis-court, they resolved to make reprisals, and avenge the manual castigation which their friend had received by a species of somewhat more severe. For this purpose, they had actually hired a set of bullies to assassinate the under-sheriff; who, in all probability, would have fallen a victim under the hands of these desperate ruffians, had not Destiny, by a well-timed display of his valour, rendered their design abortive, in the manner we have related.

We return to la Rappiniere, who was so surprised, and so pleased, with the generous conduct of Destiny, that, to shew he was not insensible to merit, he invited him and his company to pass some days at his house; when the carter, having laid down the strolling furniture, returned home to his village.

C H A P. IV.

La Rappiniere's hospitality, and the adventure of the she-goat.

MADAME la Rappiniere, the most submissive of wives, received the company with a world of politeness. This lady, whom I would introduce to the reader's acquaintance, was neither handsome nor ugly; tho' so very lean and dry, that she never snuffed a candle with her fingers, without their catching fire. I could enlarge for hours upon her good and bad qualities, and relate such stories—but I forbear, for fear of being tedious. The first compliments were scarce over, when the two ladies seemed, by mutual consent, to have banished all sort of distance and reserve, and accosted each other with dear madam, my dearest sweet Mrs. Cave, and such like familiar appellations. The under-sheriff, who had a most intolerable share of vanity, was no sooner come into the room, than looking around him, with an air of importance, he bid somebody go to the kitchen and larder and hasten supper. This order he knew it was impossible to execute, as
there

there was no-body in his house besides his valet-de-chambre, who was likewise occasionally his groom, a young maid, and an old lame woman as crazy as a mangy dog. The truth of the matter was, he generally dined and supped in taverns at the expence of every fool and bubble he met with; whilst soup, cabbage, and short commons, were the fare of his wife and orderly family at home. On the present occasion, being willing to provide a sumptuous entertainment, and well knowing the meagre state of the larder, he was slipping behind his back some money into the hands of his servant, to fetch something for supper, when his vanity was doomed to suffer a severe mortification; for thro' the awkwardness either of the master or the man, the pence fell on the chair he sat on, and from thence to the ground. This accident quite disconcerted the company; the wife blushed up to the ears; the servant cursed and muttered; miss Cave was a good deal uneasy; even la Rappiniere himself looked confounded upon it, and seemed to wish the thing had not happened. Rancour, indeed, did not much mind it; and as for Destiny, I could never learn how it affected him. Be that as it may, the
money

money was taken up, and a supper, good or bad, procured, which came in just as Destiny was informing the company that he had very good reasons to disguise himself, and particularly for wearing that large patch, which, as we have observed before, covered more than one half of his face. The more serious and important business of eating, and afterwards of drinking, which ensued, interrupted a conversation, which, for ought the reader or writer knows, might have been productive of some great discovery. Certain it is the subject did not once recur to Rappiniere that night; for, after having eaten a hearty meal, he applied the glass so frequently to his own head, that, what with eating and drinking, and telling a number of lies about himself, he was fairly knocked up, and carried dead-drunk to bed. Rancour and Mrs. Cave supped like famished players. Madame la Rappiniere determined to lay hold of the opportunity, which was seldom offered her, and eat so very greedily, that she got a surfeit; Destiny alone supped soberly, and went soberly to bed. He lay in a little room by himself, Mrs. Cave in a closet with the chambermaid, and Rancour with the valet-de-chambre, the Lord knows where. I should

should here cast a veil over the transactions of the night, had it been devoted to sleep; but, as (notwithstanding their fatigue, and their late hearty meal, so uncertain is every thing here below! they slept but little) it becomes me, as a faithful historian, to communicate all my knowledge to the curious and enquiring reader. After her first sleep, madame la Rappiniere, from what cause I know not, had an inclination to do what kings themselves must do without a proxy. In her hurry to get out of bed, she waked her husband, who, finding himself alone, called out for his wife; no-body making answer, he grew jealous, fell in a passion, and rose out of his bed, half drunk as he was, in a fury: having groped his way out of the chamber, he heard the stamping of feet before him, which increasing his suspicions, he followed the noise through a little gallery that led to Destiny's room. He now found himself so near what he pursued, that he trod upon its heels, and, fully persuaded that it was his spouse, he was going to lay hold on her, crying out, You whore! But his hands could catch nothing; and his feet at the same time giving way, he fell prostrate on his nose. He, however, continued the struggle,
till

till, feeling something pointed running into his breast, he doubted some foul play; and, thinking it high time to alarm the family, he roared out murder in a most hideous manner; help! help! I am stabbed—barbarously murdered—oh! help! The whole house was soon in an uproar, and every body ran to give assistance where it seemed to be so much required. First came the maid with a candle, then Rancour and the valet in their shirts; behind them Mrs. Cave in a tattered petticoat; Destiny followed close with a sword in his hand; and, to complete the group, madame la Rappiniere in her smock brought up the rear. They expected to see some person in imminent danger; but judge their surprize, when, by the light of the candle, they perceived the furious la Rappiniere grappling with a she-goat, which was kept in the house to suckle some young puppies, whose dam happened to die. His wife, who presently suspected the truth of the matter, asked him if he was mad: to which emphatical question he answered, not without hesitation, that he had taken the goat for a thief. The adventure ended, every one returned to his bed, mak-

ing what construction he pleased upon the affair; and as for the goat, she was shut up again with her puppies.

C H A P. V.

In which another principal hero makes his appearance.

AN hero, say the criticks, is, or ought to be, a perfect character. If so, how absurd is the conduct of our modern romance-writers, who ascribe that perfection to a single hero which they might just as easily parcel out among a much greater number. For it is evident, by the rule of proportion, that if one hero reflects credit upon any work, half a dozen such heroes will reflect just six times that credit upon the same work. As therefore I should be inexcusable to adopt that conduct, the absurdity of which I laboured to expose, nothing less than a multiplicity of heroes will serve my turn; and by this characteristic difference shall my Comic Romance be distinguished from every species of composition, whether romantic, epic, or dramatic, that has yet appeared.

Hitherto Destiny has filled the scene. It is now time for Rancour to relieve him. This stroller, whom we mean to raise to the rank of a hero, was one of those disagreeable mortals, who hate every body, and are not even much pleased with themselves. Peevishness, caprice, and discontent formed the principal outlines of his character. His wit, if he had any, was confined to a few smart strokes of repartee, and a tolerable talent in making doggrel rhimes. As for honour and conscience, he had neither. He was as malicious as an old monkey, and as envious as a famished dog. Before this redoubted hero, all characters, good and bad, were levelled promiscuously; and merit, particularly where it appeared in those of his own profession, was sure to meet with no quarter. If you named Bellerose, he was intolerably affected; Mindon, a damned bad voice; Floridor, O! a mere spouter.

These affected nothings, would he often exclaim on such occasions, are entirely strangers to the graces of true action, proper gesture; and just articulation. They pretend to express a passion, and they tear it to pieces. The reader, from this specimen, might be apt to conclude that
Mr.

Mr. Rancour possessed no small share of critical knowledge. No conclusion, however, would be more rash or worse founded. To say the truth, this arch-critic in conceit was no more than a mean vender of sentiments, picked up at second hand, which he faithfully retailed on every occasion that offered; his abilities as an actor were of the same kind; and, though he never failed to insinuate that he was the only model of perfection the stage could boast of, it was well known that he was suffered in the company, merely on the foot of old-age and long service. When the stage was reduced to Hardy's plays, he acted the parts of nurses, in a treble tone, and with a masque; but since its reformation, his sphere of action was enlarged. He now over-looked the door-keeper, and acted the parts of confidants, ambassadors, bailiffs, bullies, gentlemen-ushers, and footmen. Upon these vast accomplishments he had built an unsufferable degree of pride; which, joined to his talents for slander, and a quarrelsome over-bearing humour, supported by a little courage, made him to be dreaded by all his companions, except Destiny, with whom he was as tame as a lamb, and as reasonable as his natural inclination

would suffer him. 'Twas once confidently affirmed that a hearty drubbing given him by Destiny, had produced this peculiarity in his behaviour; but that report did not gain ground no more than another malicious story, about his having conceived so strong a passion for other people's goods, as often to make them his own without their knowledge or consent.

This Rancour, who, upon the whole, was one of the best sort of men in the world, had lain, as the reader will remember, with Doguin, the sheriff's valet-de-chambre; and whether the bed was none of the best, or that Doguin was but an indifferent bed-fellow, so it was that poor Rancour could not sleep a wink all night. At break of day Doguin being called up by his master, the stroller rose likewise; and passing by la Rappiniere's chamber, he stepped in to wish him good morrow. The latter received his compliments with all the state of a country mayor, and scarce deigned to return any of his civilities; whilst Rancour, to whom such contemptuous usage was familiar, bore all with a calm and stoic indifference. His worship was pleased, however, at length to descend from his dignity to the familiar;
and,

and, among a thousand other questions about the stage, asked Rancour, how long Destiny had been one of their company? adding, that he was an excellent player. It may be so, replied Rancour, but all is not gold that glisters; when I played the first characters, he acted those of pages; yes, sir, he has been sent on a message to your humble servant, and I have had the honour of kicking him in that capacity many's the time and oft—Now, I appeal to you, how the devil is it possible that he should understand a trade that he never learned? Is it to be supposed that players are to come up like mushrooms, in one night? No, I warrant you. What then is the cause of his success? Why he is young, he is young; but if your honour knew as much of him as I do, you would be of another guess mind, for he is as proud as if he was lineally descended from Charlemagne, and yet he won't tell us who he is, nor whence he comes, no more than a handsome Phillis, that accompanies him, under the name of sister, and who, for aught I know, is no better than a — — but no matter for that. You would not think it, perhaps, but I saved his life once at Paris at the expence of two great wounds, I received from a

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sword,

sword; and he was so unthankful for the good office, that, instead of providing me with a surgeon, he spent the whole night in searching the dirt for a certain jewel enriched with false diamonds, of which, he said, he was robbed, by those that set upon us. When, where? interrupted la Rappiniere, with some emotion. Upon the twelfth day of — on the Pontneuf, answered Rancour. This reply produced violent effects on the sheriff and his man Doguin: they became pale and red by turns; and la Rappiniere shifted the discourse in such disorder, that Rancour, who observed his confusion, began to wonder at it. The hangman of the town and some archers coming in, interrupted their conversation, to the great satisfaction of all parties, particularly of Rancour, who was sensible that what he said had touched la Rappiniere in a very tender part; though he could not possibly divine what share he might have had in the adventure.

In the mean time Rancour joined Destiny, whom he found with miss Cave, wasting his breath to no purpose to make an old taylor confess, that he knew no more about his business than a coach-horse. The matter in dispute was this,
Destiny

Destiny, it seems, had found among the playhouse furniture, two coats, and a tattered pair of breeches much worn out, which he had given to this botcher, to make out of them a more fashionable suit, than the trunk-breeches he had on; but the unaccountable blockhead, instead of making one of the coats serve to mend the other, and the breeches also, as Destiny certainly meant he should, had, through an error in judgment, unworthy of his profession, mended both the doublets out of the breeches; so that poor Destiny, with so many coats, and no breeches at all; must either keep his chamber, or submit to the mortification of being followed by the children in the streets, and hooted at, upon account of his comical dress, as he had been before. From this dilemma, he was, however, soon delivered by la Rappiniere, who generously presented him with a suit of cloaths, the spoils of a highwayman, who, by the vigilance of this worthy magistrate, had been apprehended and broke upon the wheel not long before. What, said the hangman, who was present, and who, in fact, had left those cloaths in the custody of la Rappiniere's maid, dispose of my property, a perquisite of my profession,

cession, and before my face? This remonstrance, strong as it was, was little attended to; and this officer was forced to pocket the injury, for fear of the under-sheriff, who threatened to turn him out of his place if he heard a word more about the matter. The suit fitted Destiny to a hair; who, after giving the taylor one of the botched doublets for his pains, went out with la Rappiniere and Rancour. They all dined at a tavern, at the expence of one of the burghers, who, having business with la Rappiniere, had brought him hither to transact it. Miss Cave, in the mean time, kept her landlady company; and, like an industrious actress, employed herself in washing her smocks and dirty night-gowns.

Doguin, the sheriff's valet, having met two of the young men whom he had so severely handled the day before in the tennis-court, was sent home with one large fracture in his skull, three terrible wounds in the small guts, dislocations in six different places, with bruises, blows, and contusions without number. La Rappiniere was shocked at the sight, and swore he would have satisfaction; Destiny advised him to find out the murderers, and Rancour, who did not care to sleep
with

with Doguin in his present dangerous condition, being heartily tired with strolling about the streets, went to the next inn for a bed; where we shall attend him, after having wished la Rappiniere and his company a good night.

CHAP VI.

The adventure of the chamber-pot, the death of Doguin, and other memorable occurrences.

RANCOUR went into the inn, with a hearty meal on his stomach, and something more than half drunk: he was introduced by la Rappiniere's maid, who bid the hostess get a bed ready for him. Who have we here? said the hostess; faith, had we no other customers than such as he, our house-rent would be but ill-paid. Peace, hussy, said the husband, Mr. la Rappiniere does us too much honour. My compliments to your master, child, the gentleman shall be provided with a bed. Ay, but where? rejoined the hostess; there was but one left, and a merchant from Lower-Maine bespoke it not half an hour since."

These words were scarce out of her mouth, when the merchant came in, who hearing the occasion of their dispute, offered Rancour a share of his bed; which the stroller, with some faint expressions of gratitude, accepted. The merchant having called for supper, the landlord, as usual, kept him company; and Rancour, without much entreaty, putting in for a third, began to drink upon a new score. Their conversation turned mostly upon politics, taxes, and the national debt; they damned monopolies, drank confusion to excisemen, settled the ministry, and unsettled their own brains so much; especially the inn-keeper, that forgetting he was at home, he lugged out his purse and called for the reckoning; when his wife knowing his failing, and perceiving that he was already far gone, pulled him by the shoulder, with the assistance of the maid, into his chamber, and laid him upon the bed with his cloaths on. Rancour being left alone with the merchant, told him that he was troubled with a strangury, and would be very sorry, if he should incommode him; O! not in the least, replied the merchant, who was of an obliging benevolent disposition: in any event, a night will soon be over.

It

It will be proper to observe that the bed was so placed as to be close to the wall; Rancour went into it first, and the merchant going after him lay at the stock which was considered as the place of honour. Upon lying down, Rancour asked his companion for the chamber-pot. What to do? said the merchant. Why to put it by me, to avoid being troublesome to you, replied Rancour. No trouble in the least, returned the other; I shall give it you, whenever you have occasion for it. To this kind offer Rancour seemed unwilling to consent, protesting he should be extremely sorry to trouble him. The merchant fell asleep without returning any answer; and was just beginning to enjoy the sweets of repose, when the malicious stroller, whose love of mischief would not suffer him to rest, pulled him by the arm, crying, Sir, sir. What's the matter, said the merchant, hastily, gaping and stretching himself. Pray reach me the chamber-pot, quoth Rancour. That I will, said the other: at the same time leaning over the bed, he took up the urinal, and gave it to Rancour; who, after seeming to use all his endeavours, muttering a thousand oaths to himself, and making bitter complaints

plaints of his distemper, returned it to the merchant, without making a single drop of water. The benevolent trader set it on the ground again, and opening his mouth as wide as an oven, Truly, sir, said he to Rancour, I —— I pity you, and fell asleep presently. The stroller suffered him to indulge his drowsiness, till he snored as loud as the base-pipe of an organ, when waking him a second time, he renewed his complaints, and asked him for the chamber-pot with as much malice as he had done before. The merchant, pitying his distress, delivered it into his hands with his usual kindness; when Rancour putting himself in a pissing posture, cried out still louder than before, and was twice as long endeavouring, in vain, to make water. At length, after seeming to use his utmost efforts to no purpose, he desired the merchant not to give himself the trouble to reach the chamber-pot any more, for that he would for the future reach it himself. Just as you please, answered the honest trader, yawning; methinks you have a sorry time on't, I wish you relief with all my heart. I am very much obliged to you, returned the stroller, groaning, as if he was in an agony of pain; you had better

ter compose yourself for rest. So I shall, said the other, who, in fact, would have given half he was worth for a hearty nap; and in a few minutes he was fast asleep.

Short-liv'd, however, was his tranquillity, for his malicious companion perceiving by that faithful alarm, his nose, that the merchant was got into a profound sleep, he laid his elbow on the pit of his stomach, and, stretching forth the other arm, as if he would take up something from the ground, crushed him down with the whole weight of his body. Zounds, sir, what do you mean? the unfortunate trader exclaimed in a most hideous manner, starting out of his sleep, you have almost stifled me. I ask your pardon, returned Rancour with a tone as soft and gentle, as that of the merchant was loud and vehement—I hope you are not hurt—I only meant to take up the chamber-pot——Not hurt! cried the other, I believe I am destroyed. Damn it, could not you have asked me for the pot, I had much rather have given it to you, and not sleep all the night long, you have so crushed me. Rancour made no answer, but fell a pissing so plentifully, and with such force, that the very noise
had

had been sufficient to wake the merchant. In fine, he filled the pot, and then returned Heaven thanks, with a villainous hypocrisy. The merchant, hoping his sleep would no more be interrupted, wished him joy on his plentiful discharge of urine, and was going to compose himself again for rest, when Rancour, making as if he would set the chamber-pot on the ground, let fall both the pot and its contents on the merchant's face, beard and breast, excusing himself with, Dear sir, I beg your pardon ; upon my soul it slipped out of my hand. The merchant, without returning an answer, leap'd out of bed, roaring like a mad man, and calling for a candle, while Rancour, who, secretly, enjoyed his distress, failed not to express the deepest concern at what had happened. Mean time the merchant raised the whole house with his continual roaring ; and the landlord, his wife, maids, and servants being come to know what the matter was ; The matter ! quoth he, you have put me to bed with the devil, I think—I have had such a night of it—Come, let me have a fire lighted in another room, for I'll stay no longer here. The company begged him to be more particular ; but he was in such a passion, that,

that, without gratifying their request, he took his cloaths in a fury, and went down to the kitchen to dry himself, where he lay all night stretched on a bench by the fire side.

The innkeeper importuning Rancour to tell him what he knew of the matter, Upon my honour, answered the stroller, with an air of ingenuity, which he well knew how to assume, he has surprized me no less than he has done you, nor can I for my life divine what cause he has to complain. This only I can say, that he has disturbed me in the midst of the soundest sleep I ever enjoyed in my life. He has certainly had some ill-dream or other, or is beside himself, for look ye, he has bepiss'd the bed. As I am a Christian woman and so he has, exclaimed the hostess, turning up the quilt; yes, he has wet it through and through. O! the devil take such trumpery, say I; but he gets not off so—by the mass I'll make him pay for it. Having said this, she withdrew with the company, after bidding Rancour good-night; who, now that the comedy was finished, composed himself for rest; and, in fact, he slept soundly. However, he was called up earlier than he chose by la Rappiniere's maid, who
came

came running to fetch him to Doguin, who was then just dying, and desired to speak with him before he made his exit. Impatient to know what a dying man, with whom he got acquainted but the day before, might have to say to him, Rancour lost no time in obeying the summons. On his arrival he found it was a mistake of the maid, who hearing the expiring valet call for the player, had taken him for Destiny. That stroller was just then shut up in Doguin's chamber, being informed by the priest, who confessed him, that he had something of great importance to communicate. He had not been there above a quarter of an hour, when the under-sheriff came home, having gone abroad at day-break upon business. Being told that his man, whose loss of blood rendered his wounds incurable, had desired to see the player Destiny before he died—"And has he seen him?" asked la Rappiniere in great disorder. Answer was made they were actually locked in together at that time; at which information he was in a manner thunder-struck; and running in a great fright knocked at Doguin's chamber-door, just as Destiny was opening it to call for help, the sick man being taken with

with a fainting fit. The sheriff, in great confusion, asked him what his servant had to say to him. I think he is light-headed, replied Destiny coldly, he has asked me pardon a thousand and a thousand times; and I cannot tell that he ever offended me. However, let somebody look after him, for he cannot live long. Upon this they made towards the bed, and that very instant Doguin gave up the ghost—an event at which the sympathizing sheriff seem'd rather pleased than concerned. Those who were acquainted with him judged the reason of his unconcern to be, because he owed him his wages; but Destiny alone knew best of any what he ought to think of it. In the mean time two more of the strolling company arrived at la Rappiniere's house, and were immediately recognized by Destiny. But lest the reader should be surfeited with such a variety of dishes, we defer giving any farther account of these new-comers till the next chapter.

C H A P. VII.

The adventure of the Litters.

DESTINY's servant, the youngest of the two strollers, who came to la Rappiniere's, informed his master that the rest of the company were all arrived, except Stella, who had strained her foot three leagues off Mans. But how came you hither? Who told you we were here? said Destiny. The plague, which now rages at Alençon, answered the other stroller, whose name was Olive, obliged us to make for Bonnestable; and some inhabitants of this town, whom we met by the way, informed us you acted here—We were likewise told that here had been the devil and all to do—that you had fought, and was mortally wounded; poor Stella has been much grieved on your account, and desires you to send her a litter. The keeper of the next inn, who was come at the report of Doguin's death, said he had a litter at home, and if they would pay him his demand, it should be ready to go by noon. This proposal was received with pleasure, the litter was hired for a crown, and chambers were

were taken in the inn for the whole company. About noon, the strolling caravan set out for Bonnestable, la Rappiniere having stayed behind to procure a licence for acting from the deputy governor. The day being sultry, Rancour slept in the litter, Olive was mounted on the hinder horse, and the inn-keeper's man on the other before; Destiny, who trudged it on foot, with a gun on his shoulder, was entertained by his man, during the journey, with a narrative of what had befallen the company from the castle at Loire, to a village near Bonnestable, where Stella had strained her foot, as she lighted off her horse. In the midst of this entertaining conversation, two men well mounted, and who hid their faces with their cloaks, as they passed by Destiny, rode up to the litter, on the side where it was uncovered, and finding in it but one man asleep, I verily believe, said he that was mounted on the best horse, all the devils in hell are this day broke loose against me, and have turned themselves into the shape of litters to plague me; which said, he clapped spurs to his horse and rode across the field, with his companion after him. Olive called Destiny, and recounted to him
the

the adventure, the meaning of which he could not understand; nor indeed did he give himself much trouble about the matter. They had not proceeded a quarter of a league farther, when the driver of the litter, who had fallen into a profound sleep, brought it into a quagmire, where Rancour was like to be over-turned. The horses having broke their traces, they were obliged to unharness them, and pull them out of the dirt by neck and tail. With difficulty they reached the next village, where, whilst the shattered furniture of the litter was refitting, Rancour, Olive, and Destiny's man took a hearty glass at the gate of an inn that happened to be in the village. At this instant came by another litter, led by two men on foot, which likewise stopped before the inn. Scarce was this litter arrived, but there appeared another an hundred steps behind it. It is my humble opinion, said Rancour, that all the litters in the province have agreed to rendezvous here, about some business of importance; and to hold a general council; but methinks they ought to begin their conferences; for 'tis not probable that any more will come.

Nay,

Nay, said the hostess, here's another—and in truth they saw a fourth, coming from Mans, which made them all laugh heartily, except Rancour, who never laughed, as I said before. The last litter stopped with the rest; and in the memory of man, so many litters were never seen together. If those that looked for litters, and whom we met a while ago, where here, they would have enough of them, said the leader of the first litter. I have met with some of them, said the second; so have we, said he that conducted the stroller's litter; to which he that came last added, he was like to have been thrashed by them. But why? asked Destiny. Because, answered he, they had a design upon a certain gentlewoman, who strained her foot, and whom we carried to Mans. I never saw men so furious and unreasonable; they quarrelled with me, only because they missed of what they looked for. This made the strollers attentive; and by the answer of the litter-man to two or three questions they put to him, they were informed, that the lady of the lord of the village where Stella strained her foot, had given her a visit, and taken great care to have her carried safe to Mans. The conversation

sation continued a little longer between the litters; and they learnt of one another, that they were all searched by the same men whom the strollers saw. The first litter carried the parson of Domfront, who came from the wells of Bellefin, and went to Mans, in order to get the physicians of that place to consult about his distemper. The second carried a wounded officer, who returned from the army. At last the litters parted; those of the parson of Domfront, and of the strollers, went together to Mans; and the others were they thought fit. The sick parson lighted at the same inn where the strollers were quartered, being the place where he used to lie on that road. We will leave him to take his rest in his room, and in our next chapter we shall pay a visit to the strollers, to see what is doing in theirs.

C H A P. VIII.

Wherein are contained many things necessary to be known, for the understanding of this true history.

THE strolling company consisted of Destiny, Olive, and Rancour, who had each of them a servant, who all expected to be one day, actors in chief. Of those servants, some began to speak without blushing, or being out of countenance. But among the rest, Destiny's man acted indifferently well, understood what he said, and did not want wit. Stella, and Mrs. Cave's daughter, Angelica, played the principal parts. Mrs. Cave acted the queen, the mother, and sometimes harlequin's mistress in farces. Besides all these, they had a poet or an author with them; with whose works all the grocers shops in the kingdom were stored. This great wit followed the company almost against their will; but because he was no sharer, and that he spent his own money with them, they suffered him to act under parts, which he nevertheless generally murdered. They all perceived well enough, that he was in
love

love with one of the two actresses; but, however, he was so discreet, though a little crack-brained, that it was not yet discovered, which of the two he designed to foother into compliance, by his offers of making her immortal. He threatened the company with a great many plays of his own writing; but till then had spared them, and they only knew by conjecture, that he was about one called Martin Luther, of which they found the first act; which, however, he disowned, altho' it was written with his own hand. When our strollers first arrived, the womens chamber was continually crowded with the most impertinent fops and beaux of the town; whose eagerness notwithstanding was frequently cooled by the indifferent reception they met with. They talked altogether about plays, poetry, poets, and romances; and there could not possibly have been more noise unless they had been fighting. The poet, among the rest, surrounded by three or four, who, without doubt, were the first-rate wits of the town, laboured to persuade them, that he had seen Corneille, craked many a bottle with St. Amant and Bruys, and lost a good friend by the death of Rotrou. Mrs. Cave and her daughter
Angelica

Angelica set their goods in order, with as great tranquility, as if there had been no creature in the room. 'Tis true, Angelica's fair hands were now and then squeezed or kissed; for your country gentlemen are ever pulling and hauling; but a kick, a box on the ear, or a biting, according as occasion required, soon rid her of those lovers so valiant before their time; nor was she rude and imprudent neither, but her free and gay humour would not suffer her to use much ceremony: as for her other qualities, she had wit and was very honest. Mrs. Stella was of a quite different temper; there never was a more modest, gentle, and good natured woman in the world; and besides she at that time strained her complaisance so far, that she could not find in her heart to turn these ogling fops out of her chamber, though she felt a great pain in her strained foot, and had therefore occasion for rest. She lay in her cloaths, on a bed surrounded by four or five of these whining coxcombs, stunned with their puns and clinches, which pass for good jests in the country, and often forcing a smile upon hearing things she did not like. But this is one of the greatest plagues of that profession, which, together

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with

with their being obliged to laugh or weep, whether they have a mind to it or no, takes very much from their pleasure of being sometimes emperors and empresses, and of being called angels, though they be little handsomer than devils, or addressed as youthful beauties, though their hair and teeth be carried along in their wardrobe. There are many more things to be said upon this subject, but we must use them sparingly, and place them at convenient intervals, for variety's sake. Let us then return to Stella, beset with country squires, the most troublesome of men, all great talkers, most of them very impertinent, and amongst them some newly returned from the university.

Among the rest appeared a little man, who was a widower, a lawyer by profession, and an officer in a small court of judicature in the neighbourhood: Since the death of his little wife, he sometimes threatened the women to marry again; and sometimes the clergy of the province to turn priest, nay, even to become a preacher. He was the greatest little fool that ever ran wild about since the times of Orlando Furioso. He had studied books all his life time; but though the chief end of learning be the knowledge of truth,

truth, yet was he as great a lyar as a court page, as proud and obstinate as a pedant, and so bad a poet as to deserve drowning; if the government would have taken care to rid the kingdom of such a troublesome race of rhymers. As soon as Destiny and his companions came into the room, without giving them the time to know who he was, he offered to read them a poem of his own making, called The Deeds and Atchievements of Charlemain, in four and twenty books. This proposal put all the company into such a fright as to make their hair stand an end; but Destiny, who, in this general terror, preserved a little judgment, told him with a smile, that it was not possible for them to give him the hearing before supper. Well then, said he, I will read you a story taken out of a Spanish book, which was sent me from Paris, and of which I design to make a regular play. They shifted the discourse three or four times, on purpose to avoid hearing what they supposed to be abominable. But though they often interrupted him, yet did our little man not lose courage; and, at length, with often beginning his story, and encreasing his voice, he forced them to hear him out; which, however, they

did not repent, because the tale proved to be a good one, and altered the ill opinion they had of all that came from Ragotin, which was the name of our little hero.

C H A P. IX.

The history of the invisible mistress.

DON Carlos of Arragon was a young gentleman of the family that bore that name. He performed wonders at the public games, which the viceroy of Naples entertained the people with, upon the marriage of Philip the Second. The day after a running at the ring, where he bore away the prize, the viceroy gave liberty to the ladies to go about the city in masks, after the French mode, for the conveniency of strangers, whom the public rejoicings had invited thither. Upon that very day Don Carlos put on his finest cloaths, and with many other conquerors of hearts, repaired to the church of gallantry. Churches are prophaned in these countries, as well as in ours; but, as I was saying, Don Carlos being in a church, with several other Italian and Spanish

Spanish gentlemen, priding themselves in the finery of their feathers, three ladies in masks accosted him, one of whom spoke to him to this effect : Signior Don Carlos, there is a lady in this city, to whom you are very much obliged, for at all the jousts and tournaments, her wishes went still along with you in those exercises, wherein you bore away the prize. What I find most advantageous in this you tell me, answered Don Carlos, is to have it from the mouth of a lady who seems to be a person of merit ; yet had I so much as hoped that any of the fair sex had been on my side, I would have taken more care to deserve her approbation. The unknown lady replied he had given all the proofs imaginable of his being a most dexterous and accomplished gentleman ; and that by his black and white liveries, he had shewn he was not in love. I never was well acquainted with the meaning of colours, answered Don Carlos ; but this I know, that if I am not in love, 'tis not so much on account of my being indifferent, as because I am sensible I do not deserve to be beloved. They said to one another a thousand fine things more, which I shall not relate, because I know nothing of them,

and would be loath to make fictions, lest I should wrong Don Carlos and the unknown lady, who had much more wit than I can pretend to, as I was lately informed, by a young Neopolitan who knew them both. In short, the lady in the mask declared to Don Carlos, that 'twas she who had an inclination for him : He desired to see her face ; which she refused, and told him, That he must not expect it yet ; that she would look for a more proper opportunity ; and that, to let him know she feared not to trust herself alone with him, she would give something as a remembrance. At these words she pulled off her glove, and having shewed the Spaniard the finest hand in the world, presented him with a ring ; which he received with so great a surprize at the adventure, that he almost forgot to make a bow, and thank her upon her going from him. The other gentlemen, who out of civility had left him, being come to him again, he told them what had happened, and shewed them the ring, which was of considerable value. Every one spoke his thoughts upon this adventure ; and Don Carlos was as much in love with the unknown lady, as if he had seen her face—So great is the power of
wit

wit on those who have it themselves. He was eight long days without hearing from this lady; but whether he was uneasy at it, I could never be well informed. In the mean time he went every day to divert himself at the house of a captain of foot, where several men of quality met to play. One night, having been at play, and going home sooner than ordinary, he was called by his name out of a parlour in a great house. He went near the window, which was latticed, and knew, by the voice that called him, that it was his invisible mistress, who said to him, Come near, Don Carlos, I expect you here to decide our controversy. You are but a boaster, said Don Carlos; you challenge with insolence, and yet hide yourself for eight days together, and then, alas! appear only through a lattice. We shall see one another nearer in time, answered she: 'tis not for want of courage I have delayed being with you all this time, but I had a mind to know you better before I discovered myself. You know that in duels the combatants ought to fight with arms alike: now, if your heart be not as free as mine, you would fight with advantage, and therefore I have made enquiries after you. And what information

have you got? answered Don Carlos. That we are much upon a footing, returned the invisible lady. But, said Don Carlos, there's yet a great inequality betwixt us; for, added he, you both see and know who I am; whereas, I neither see nor know who you are: now consider, pray, what I can judge of your concealing yourself, since people seldom do so when they have a good design. It is an easy matter to impose at first upon a man that mistrusts nothing, but he is not to be cheated twice; if you make use of me only to give another jealousy, I must freely tell you, that I am the most unfit person for it in the world, and that I am good for nothing else beside loving you. Have you done with your rash suspicions? said the invisible lady. You may call them rash if you please, replied Don Carlos; however, they are not really so. I would have you to know, said she, I am sincere; you will find me such in all our intercourse; and I expect you should be so too. That's but reasonable, answered Don Carlos; but 'tis just likewise that I should see you, and know who you are. You shall be satisfied in that e'er it be long, said the invisible lady; and in the mean time hope with patience; for that's
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the only way for you to obtain what you expect from me. Now, that you may justify your love to your discretion, I am willing to let you know, that my birth is not inferior to yours; that I have a fortune sufficient to make you live with as great magnificence as any prince in the kingdom; that I am rather handsome than ill-favoured; and, as for wit, you have too much of that yourself not to discover whether I have any or no. She had no sooner made an end of her speech, but she withdrew, leaving Don Carlos ready to answer her; so very much in love with a person he never saw, and so perplexed about this odd way of proceeding, which might prove at last a cheat. He was not ignorant that there were a great many princesses and ladies of quality in Naples; but knew likewise, that there were abundance of rapacious courtezans in that city, eager after strangers, and the more dangerous, as they were handsome. I cannot positively tell, whether he had supped at this time, or whether he went to bed without a supper.

Neither do I care to imitate the writers of romances, who mark with great exactness all the hours of the day, and make their heroes rise betimes, relate their ad-

ventures by dinner-time, eat but little at dinner, then resume the story after dinner, or retire into the thickest part of a wood, in order to entertain themselves alone; unless when they say something to the rocks and trees. To return therefore to my story, Don Carlos repaired the next day to his post, where the invisible lady waited his coming: she asked him if he had not been much perplexed about their last conversation, and if he had not doubted the truth of what she told him. Don Carlos, without answering her question, desired her to tell him what danger she feared in discovering herself, since they were upon even terms: and that the end of their amours being honourable, it would have the approbation of all. The danger is very great, and you will have it in time, said the invisible lady: once more be satisfied that I am true, and that in the account I gave you of myself, I was rather modest than vain. Don Carlos did not press her any farther: their conversation, which continued some time longer, encreased the mutual love they had for each other; and they parted, with promises to meet every day, at the appointed hour and place. The ensuing day there was a great ball at the viceroy's, where

where Don Carlos hoped to know his invisible charmer ; but in the mean time, endeavoured to learn at whose house she gave him those favourable audiences. He was told by the neighbours, that it belonged to an old lady, widow to a Spanish captain, who had neither daughters nor nieces, and lived very retired. He desired to wait on her, but she sent him word, that since her husband died, she admitted no visits ; which still perplexed him more. Don Carlos went in the evening to the viceroy's, where you may imagine there was a fine and numerous assembly, there he nicely observed all the ladies, in hopes to find out his unknown mistress. He engaged in conversation with several, but was disappointed in his search. At last he kept close to the daughter of a marquis, of I know not what marquissate, for 'twas the most difficult thing to know in the world, especially at that juncture, when every body set up for quality. She was young and handsome, and had a voice not unlike that of the person he looked after ; but then he found such great disproportion betwixt her wit and that of his invisible, that he was sorry he had made such progress with this fine lady, who,

without any flattery to himself, he had reason to believe did not hate him. They danced several times together; and the ball being over, to the great satisfaction of Don Carlos, he took his leave of his captive, whom he left full of pride, for having had to herself, in so fine an assembly, a cavalier who was envied by all the men, and esteemed by all the women. As soon as he came out of the ball, he went in great haste to his house, and from thence to the fatal grate, which was not far off. His lady, who was there already, asked him news of the ball, although she had been there herself. He told her very ingenuously, that he had danced with a very beautiful person, and entertained her all the time the ball lasted. She asked him several questions in relation to her, which discovered her jealousy: As for Don Carlos, he let her understand that he began to suspect her quality, by reason she had not been at the ball. She having taken notice of it, used all the charms of her wit to remove his suspicions, and favoured him as far as was possible in the conversation that past with a grate between; adding withal, that in a short time she would become visible. They parted: Don Carlos very much in doubt, whether

whether he ought to believe her, and she somewhat jealous of the fine person he had entertained during the ball. The next day Don Carlos going to hear mass at a certain church, offered holy water to two veiled ladies, who went to take some at the same time with him: she who appeared in the better cloaths of the two told him, she never accepted of any civility from one with whom she had a quarrel to decide. If you are not too much in haste, answered Don Carlos, you may have satisfaction in that this very moment. Well, said the unknown lady, follow me into the next chapel. She led the way, and Don Carlos followed, very much in doubt, whether she was his unknown mistress or not; for though her shape was the same, yet he found some difference between their voices, this new lady speaking somewhat thick. This is the substance of what she told him, after she had shut herself up with him in the chapel. All the city of Naples, Signior Don Carlos, talks of the high reputation you have gained during that little time you have been here; and every body looks upon you, as the most accomplished man in the world: the only thing that people wonder at, is, your not taking
notice

notice that there are in this city, some ladies of quality and merit, who have a particular esteem for you ; they have discovered this to you as far as decency would allow ; and, though 'tis their eager desire to make you sensible of it, yet they had rather you had not taken notice of it, through insensibility, than that you should have despised their favours through indifference. Among the rest, there's one of my acquaintance who has such a value for you, as to hazard her own reputation by telling you, that your last night's adventures are discovered ; that you rashly engage in an amour with one you do not know ; and that, since your mistress conceals herself, she must either be ashamed of her lover, or conscious of not deserving him. I question not but the object of your contemplative love, is a lady of great quality and wit ; and that your fancy has framed such a mistress, as is worthy of adoration upon all accounts : but, Signior Don Carlos, believe not your imagination at the expence of your judgment ; trust not a person who conceals herself, and engage no more in these night-conversations. But why should I disguise myself any longer ? I myself am jealous of this phantom of yours : I cannot
not

not bear you should speak to her; and, since I have declared my mind so far, I will so thwart all her designs, that I do not much question but I shall carry away the prize, to which I have as much right as she, since I am not inferior to her, either in beauty, riches, quality, or love. If you are wise, you will make use of this advice. When she had spoke these last words, she went away without giving Don Carlos time to answer her. He was going to follow her, but met, at the church gate, a man of quality, who engaged him in a tedious conversation, from which he could not rid himself. He reflected the remainder of the day upon this adventure, and suspected, at first, the lady at the ball, to be the veiled person that had appeared to him: but then calling to mind that she had shewed much more wit than he had found in this, he was at a loss what to think, and wished almost not to have been engaged with his unknown mistress, that he might give himself entirely up to the new one. But then again, considering that he knew her no better than his invisible, whose wit had charmed him in all the conversation he had had with her, he firmly resolved to be constant to his first choice, without
minding

minding in the least the threats of the last lady; for he was not to be wrought upon by fear or compulsion. That very night he failed not to return to the grated window at the usual hour; where, in the height of his conversation with his mistress, he was seized by four strong men in masks, who, having disarmed him, hurried him by force into a coach that waited for them at the end of the street. I leave the reader to think, how many abusive names he gave those men in disguise, and how he reproached them for attacking him at a disadvantage: nay, he endeavoured to win them by promises; but, instead of persuading them, he only made them more upon their guard, and put himself out of hopes of being able to shew either his strength or courage. In the mean time, the coach drove on a full trot, and having got out of the city, after an hour's travelling, came into a great yard, the gate of which was kept open to receive it. The four maskers alighted with Don Carlos, holding him under the arms, like an ambassador introduced to salute the grand-signior: he was carried up one pair of stairs in the same manner, where two gentlewomen in masks came to receive him at the door of a large room,
each

each with a candlestick in her hand, when the four men in disguise took their leaves of him with a profound reverence. 'Tis probable they left him neither sword nor pistol, and that he did not forget to thank them for their extraordinary care of his person : and yet perhaps he never thought on it. As for the room, it was the most magnificent in the world; and, if you would know it, as well furnished as some apartments in our romances; books that have certainly the best furniture in the world. Now imagine what surprize our Spaniard was in, to find himself in this stately apartment with two speechless women in masks, who, having conducted him into another chamber, still better furnished than the great room, left him all alone. Had he been of Don Quixote's humour, he would have found sufficient matter to please his fancy, and imagined himself to be no less than Esplandian or Amadis : but our Spaniard was no more concerned than if he had been in his inn, save only that he had a great regret for his invisible lady; and as he kept his thoughts continually employed upon her, he found that chamber more melancholly than a prison, which always looks most pleasant on the outside. He was easily persuaded,

suaded, that those who had provided him so fair a lodging were none of his enemies ; and doubted not, but the lady who spoke to him the day before in the church, was the conjurer that had raised all these enchantments. He admired, within himself, the caprice of women, and how soon they put their designs in execution : as for his part, he resolved to wait patiently the end of this adventure, and be faithful to his invisible mistress, in spite of all the threats and promises he might receive in his new lodging. A little while after, several servants in masks, and in very good cloaths, came to lay the cloth, and then served up supper. Every thing belonging to it was magnificent ; music and perfumes were not forgotten ; and Don Carlos not only gratified his smell and hearing, but his taste also ; for he eat and drank more than I thought a man in his condition could have done. But what's impossible to courage ! The music played a while after supper ; but all being withdrawn, Don Carlos fetched many a turn about the room, reflecting on all these enchantments, or perhaps on something else ; then came in two women and a dwarf, all in masks, who, without asking him whether he had a mind to go to bed

bed or not, spread a magnificent toilet, in order to undress him. He complied with them in every thing: the woman turned down the bed-cloaths, and then withdrew: the dwarf pulled off his shoes, and then his other cloaths: all which being done without exchanging a word, Don Carlos went to bed, and slept pretty well for a man in love. At break of day he was waked by the singing of birds, that fluttered about in an aviary; the dwarf came to wait upon him, and brought him the finest linnen in the world, and the best washed and perfumed. If you please, I shall not mention what he did till dinner (which was at least as good as his supper had been) but pass to the first breaking of that profound silence, which had been observed to that very hour. A gentlewoman in a mask began to speak, by asking him if he would be pleased to see the mistress of that enchanted palace. Don Carlos said, she should be welcome: and a little after she came in, attended by four women very richly dressed.

*Such were not Cytherea's charms,
When drest in gay and loose attire,
She flew to a new lover's arms,
Upon the wings of soft desire.*

Never

Never had our Spaniard seen a person of more majestic mien than this unknown Urganda. He was so transported, and surprized at the same time, that he stumbled at every bow and step he made, as he led her into the next room, whither she directed him.

All the fine things he had seen in the other rooms where nothing in comparison to what he found in this last, which still received new brightness from the masked lady. They walked on the finest carpet that ever was seen, since carpets were in fashion: there the Spaniard was placed in an arm-chair in spite of himself; and the lady sitting by herself, on a sofa over against him, ravished his ears with a voice as sweet as an harpsichord, speaking to him to this effect. I doubt not, Signior Don Carlos, but you are much surprized at what has happened to you in my house since yesterday; but if all this is not able to move you, yet by it you may see I am as good as my word; and from what I have done, you may guess what I am able to do. Perhaps my rival, both by her artifice, and the advantage she has of having attacked you first, has made herself absolute mistress of that heart, which I nevertheless pretend
to

to dispute my right to with her : but a woman is not to be discouraged by the first disappointment ; and if my fortune, which is not despicable, together with my person, cannot persuade you to love me ; yet shall I have the satisfaction of not concealing myself out of shame or deceit, and chuse to be despised through my defects, rather than be beloved through my artifice. As she spoke these last words, she pulled off her mask, and shewed Don Carlos the heavens with all their glories ; or, if you please, a heaven in miniature : the finest face in the world, supported by the best shape he ever admired before ; in short, a person all over divine. By the freshness of her complexion, one would not have thought her to have been above sixteen years of age ; but by a certain free and majestic air, which young persons generally want, she appeared to be near twenty. Don Carlos paused a while before he answered her, being almost angry with his invisible lady, who hindered him from surrendering himself intirely to the finest person he ever saw, and dubious what he should say or do. At last, after an inward conflict, which lasted so long, as to make the mistress of the enchanted palace uneasy, he took a firm

firm resolution not to conceal from her his inmost thoughts ; which, without any manner of question, was the best he could do. This is the answer he gave her, which some have thought a little too open. Madam, I could not but own myself extremely happy in your esteem, if my stars would but suffer me to love you. I see, well enough, that I leave the finest person in the universe, for one, who, perhaps, is only such in my fancy ; but, madam, would you think me worth your affection, if you found me capable of infidelity ? And how can I be faithful, if I love you ? Therefore, madam, pity me, but blame me not : or rather let us pity each other, and complain both ; you of not obtaining what you desire, and I of not seeing what I love. He uttered these words with such a melancholy air, that the lady might easily perceive he spoke his true sentiments. She used all the arguments she could think of to persuade him to alter his mind, but he was deaf to her prayers, and unconcerned at her tears. She renewed the attack several times, but met still with a stout resistance. At last she began to revile and reproach him, and told him,

*What rage and jealousy suggest,
When they possess a love-sick breast ;*

and then she left him, not to tranquility, but to curse a hundred times his misfortune, which proceeded only from being too happy. A lady came a little after to acquaint him, that he had the liberty to walk in the garden. He traversed all these fine apartments, without meeting any body, till he came to the stair-case, at the foot of which he saw ten men in masks, who kept the door, armed with carabines. As he was crossing the court to go into the garden, one of the gentlemen of the guard accosted him without looking him in the face, and told him, as though he feared to be overheard, That an old gentleman had trusted him with a letter, which he had promised to deliver into his own hands, though his life must answer for it, if he should be discovered ; but that a present of twenty pistoles, and a promise of as many more, made him run all hazards. Don Carlos promised him secrecy, and went strait into the garden, where he read the letter, as follows :

“You may judge what pains I have felt since I lost you, by those you ought
to

to feel yourself, if you love me as much as I do you : However, my uneasiness is something abated, by being informed of the place where you are. 'Tis the princess Porcia who stole you away ; she's a woman that stops at nothing to please herself, and you are not the first Rinaldo of that dangerous Armida. But I will soon break all her enchantments, and disengage you from her arms, to receive you into mine; which favour you will deserve, if you are as constant as I wish you to be to

“ *The Invisible Lady.* ”

Don Carlos was so transported with joy, at this news from his mistress, with whom he was really in love, that he kissed the letter a hundred times over, and came back to the garden-door, to recompence the messenger with a fine diamond ring he had on his finger. He walked a little longer in the garden, still wondering at the princess Porcia, whom he often heard people report to be a young lady, rich and of the best family in the kingdom ; but as he was a person of strict virtue, he conceived such an aversion for her, that he resolved to break out of his prison, even at the hazard of his life. As he came
out

out of the garden, he met a lady unmasked (for from that time forward, every body went barefaced in the palace) who came to ask, if he would be pleased to have her mistress eat with him? And I leave you to think whether he answered, she should be welcome. A little after they served up supper, or dinner, for I have forgot which of the two it ought to have been: Porcia appeared more beautiful, as was said, than Venus; and it will not be amiss, if, for variety sake, I now say, than an angel: she was charming in every respect; and during the time they were at-table, the Spaniard discovered so much wit, that he was in a manner sorry, to find so many excellent qualities, so ill bestowed on a person of so high a degree. He did all he could to appear in good humour, and forced a pleasing countenance, although he was continually thinking upon his unknown mistress; and burnt with impatience to return to the lattice. As soon as table was cleared, they were left by themselves; and because Don Carlos spoke not a word, either out of respect, or only to oblige the lady to speak first, she broke silence in these words: I know not whether I ought to hope something from the gaiety I fancy I have discovered in your

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face;

face; and whether mine, which you have seen already, does seem handsome enough to make you doubt, whether that of your invisible mistress, has more charms to captivate your heart. I do not conceal what I designed to present you with, because I would not have you repent the accepting my present; and though a person who has been used to be instructed by others, be apt to be offended at a denial; yet will I forgive you, provided you repair your past offence, by giving me what I have more right to than your invisible: therefore tell me your last resolution, that, if in case it be not in my favour, I may at least find out new reasons, strong enough to combat those, which I think I had to love you. Don Carlos thought she would have gone on; but observing she spoke no more, and that, with eyes fixed on the ground, she expected her doom from his mouth; he resumed his former resolution of telling her frankly, that he could never be her's. Madam, said he, before I answer what you would know of me, I must desire you, that, with the same frankness you expect from me, you would be pleased to tell me your sentiments, about what I am going to propose to you. Suppose, added he, you had engaged a man to love you, and that
by

by all the favours a lady can grant without wronging her virtue, you had obliged him to swear an inviolable fidelity, would you not account him the basest and most treacherous of mankind, if he should fail in his promise? And were I not that villain, and that traitor, if I should leave, for you, a person who has reason to think I love her? He was going on with his arguments, to convince her; however she did not give him time, but rising abruptly from her seat, told him, that she plainly saw the drift of his discourse; that she could not but admire his constancy, tho' so much opposite to her own quiet, that she would set him at liberty; and that she only desired him to stay till night, to go back in the same manner he came. While she was speaking, she held her handkerchief to her eyes, as tho' she designed to conceal her tears, and afterwards left the Spaniard a little concerned; yet so transported with joy that he was to be again at liberty, that he had not been able to conceal it, had he been the greatest hypocrite in the world; and I verily believe, that had the lady taken notice of it, she would certainly have scolded him for it. I know not whether it was long before night came, for, as I told you before, I

don't trouble myself about marking the time: you must be contented to know, that night came at last, and that he went into a close coach, and was set down at his lodgings, after a pretty long journey. As he was the best master in the world, so his servants were quite transported at the sight of him, and almost stifled him with their embraces; but they did not enjoy him long; for having provided himself with arms, and taken two of his stoutest men with him, he presently went to the grated-window in such haste, that those who accompanied him, had enough to do to keep pace with him. He had no sooner given the usual signal, but his invisible deity communicated herself to him, when they exchanged the softest and tenderest expressions. At last the lady told him, she had been lately affronted in that house, and therefore had sent for a coach in order to leave it; but because it might be a long while coming, she desired him to send for his, which might be sooner got ready; and that she would carry him to a place, where she would no longer conceal her face from him. The Spaniard needed no farther intreaty, but ran like a mad man to his men, whom he left at the end of the street, and sent for his coach in all haste:

haste: the coach being come, the invisible lady kept her word, and went into it with Don Carlos. She directed the coachman which way he should drive, and bid him stop at a great house, into the court-yard of which the coach went by the light of several flambeaux, which were lighted at their arrival. The cavalier leading his lady, went up stairs into a very large room, where he was a little uneasy, because she did not pull off her mask. At last several ladies being come to receive them, with each a candlestick in her hand, the lady was invisible no longer; but pulling off her mask, let Don Carlos see, that the lady at the grated-window, and the princess Porcia, were but one person. I will not endeavour to describe the pleasant surprise of the Spaniard: the fair Neapolitan told him, she had stolen him away a second time to know his last resolution; that the lady at the lattice had made over to her all her pretensions, and added a thousand expressions, no less obliging than ingenuous. Don Carlos threw himself at her feet, embraced her knees, and devoured, as one may say, her hands with kisses: by that means avoiding all the impertinence and nonsense which people generally speak when they are transported with joy. The

raptures of his passion being over, he used all his wit and eloquence to extol the agreeable caprice of his mistress, and expressed himself so much to her advantage, that he confirmed her, she was not mistaken in her choice. She told him, she had been unwilling to trust any body but herself in a thing, without which she could never have loved him; and that she would never have bestowed herself upon a man less constant than he was. Upon this the princess's relations came in, having had notice given them of her design: and as they were the chief men in the kingdom, they easily obtained a dispensation from the archbishop for their marriage. The same night the ceremony was performed by the priest of the parish, who was a good preacher; and so it were needless to ask, whether he made a fine exhortation upon the subject. It is said, they got up late the next day, which I am inclined to believe. The news was soon spread about, at which, the viceroy, a near relation of Don Carlos's, was so overjoyed, that the public rejoicings began a-new in Naples; where, to this day, they talk of Don Carlos of Arragon, and his invisible mistress.

C H A P. X.

*How Ragotin received a blow on the fingers
with a busk.*

RAGOTIN'S story received general applause, and he valued himself as much upon it, as if it had been his own; which swelling his natural pride, he began to treat the actors with contempt; and afterwards accosting the women, squeezed their hands without their consent, and offered to feel their breasts; a piece of country gallantry, which favours more of the satyr than the gentleman. Stella contented herself to force her soft, fair hand from his dirty clutches; but Angelica her companion smiling, gave him a rap on the fingers with her busk. He left them abruptly, without so much as speaking a word, glowing with rage and confusion, and returned to the men's company, where every one spoke as fast as he could, without minding what the rest said. Ragotin silenced most of them, by demanding of them, with a superior voice, what they thought of his novel? A young man, whose name I have forgot, answered him bluntly, it was no more his than any body's

dy's else in the company, since he had it out of a book: and seeing one stick out of Ragotin's pocket he pulled it out; which the little man perceiving, scratched his hands to get it from him; but in spite of Ragotin, he put it into another man's hands, from whom Ragotin endeavoured to snatch it, to as little purpose as before. The book having got by this time into a third man's hands, after the same manner passed to five or six different hands more; which Ragotin however could not reach, because he was the shortest man in the company. At last, having stretched himself five or six times in vain, torn half a dozen pair of ruffles, scratched as many hands, and the book still travelling about through the middle region of the chamber, poor Ragotin, who saw every body laugh at his expence, rushed like a madman upon the first author of his confusion, and dealt him several blows on his belly and thighs, not being able to reach higher. The hands of his adversary, who had the advantage of situation, fell five or six times so perpendicular, and heavy on the top of his head, that the crown of his hat sunk down to his very chin; which so shook the seat of his reason, that the poor little man did not, for some time, know where

where he was. To compleat his defeat, his antagonist at parting, gave him a sound kick on the head, which, after a very sudden retrogradation, made him fall at his feet. Now, if possible, I would have you to conceive the rage and fury of a little man, more proud than all the decayed gentry in the kingdom, at a time when he was exulting in the success of his story; and that too, before actresses to whom he designed to make love; tho' he was yet ignorant, which of them had the greater title to his heart. To speak the truth, his little body thus tumbled on his breech, did so lively represent the fury of his soul, by the different motions of his arms and legs, that tho' his face could not be seen, because his whole head was enchased into his hat, yet all the company thought fit to join, and form, as it were, a barrier betwixt Ragotin and his adversary; who, by this means, got away, whilst the charitable actresses raised the poor little man, roaring like a lion in his hat, which stopped his eyes and mouth, and almost hindered him from fetching his breath. Now the difficulty was, how to pull off his hat, for its crown being in the form of a butter-pot, and the mouth of it narrower than the bottom, it was almost im-

possible for a head that got itself in by force, and whose nose was so excessive large, to be able to get out the same way. This misfortune had a good effect; for his anger being now at the highest, without doubt, its consequences had been answerable, had not his hat, which suffocated him, made him consult his own preservation, rather than contrive the destruction of others. He did not cry out for help, because he had not the use of his tongue: but when the company perceived he lifted up, in vain, his hands to his head, in order to set it at liberty, and stamped on the floor with rage and indignation, they all bent their thoughts on his relief. The first efforts they used to pull off his hat were so violent, that he thought they had been going to pluck off his head too: at last, being almost spent, he made signs with his fingers to have it cut with a pair of scissars. Mrs. Cave unclapst those she wore on her girdle; and Rancour, who was to perform the operation, having made a shew of making the incision over against his face, (which did not a little fright him) at last, he cut his hat behind, from top to bottom. As soon as he had given vent to his face, all the company fell a laughing to see it bloated, as if it had

had been ready to burst, upon account of the vast quantity of spirits that had flushed to it; and besides, his nose was a little excoriated. However, the jest had gone no farther, had not a bungling taylor advised him to get his hat fine-drawn. This unseasonable advice so revived his anger, which was not entirely extinguished, that he laid hold of one of the andirons, and threatened to throw it at the company; which put the stoutest of them all in such a fright, that every one ran to the door, in order to avoid the impending ruin. They pressed so fast upon one another, that not above one was able to get out; and he too by a fall. It was now Ragotin fell a laughing in his turn, which gave all the company fresh courage; they therefore returned him his book, and the players lent him an old hat. It is true he still was angry with the man who used him so scurvily; but being somewhat more vain than revengeful, he told the players, with the air of one that was going to promise some extraordinary thing, that he had a mind to make a play out of this story of his, and would contrive it so well, that he was sure to get as much reputation by that single piece, as other poets had in all their lives gained by several. Destiny told him the story he had related

was very entertaining, but would, by no means, fit the stage. Sure, said Ragotin, you won't pretend to teach me; I would have you to know, that my mother was seamstress to the poet Garnier, and I myself am possessed of his standish. Destiny replied, that even Garnier would get no reputation by it, tho' he were to do it himself. But what difficulty do you find in it? asked Ragotin. The difficulty, answered Destiny, is in that it cannot be brought into a regular play, without committing a great many faults, both in point of decorum and judgment. As for that, said Ragotin, a man of my parts, may make new rules whenever he pleases. Pray consider, added he, what a new and magnificent thing it would be, to represent a great church-gate in front of the stage, before which twenty beaux, more or less, with as many ladies, should appear and speak a thousand fine things to one another; would it not ravish all the spectators with admiration think you? Destiny interrupted, to ask him, where they could get so many gentlemen and ladies? And how do they in colleges, said Ragotin, where they fight pitched battles? I myself played at La Flesche, the Overthrow at the Bridge of So, when above a hundred soldiers of the queen-

queen-mother's party appeared on the stage, besides those of the king's army, which was more numerous: and I remember, in consequence of a great shower that fell that day and spoiled the sport, it was reported, that all the fine feathers of the country quality, which had been borrowed on this occasion, would never come to themselves again. Destiny, who took great delight in hearing him utter all these judicious things, replied, that colleges had scholars enough for that purpose, whereas their company did never consist in all of above seven or eight persons: Rancour, who, you know, had ever been a malicious dog, sided with Ragotin merely to make him ridiculous, and told his comrade, he was not of his opinion; that he had been a player before him, that a church-gate would be the finest scene that ever was seen; and as for the necessary number of gentlemen and ladies, that they might have some flesh and blood, and represent the rest with pasteboard. This fine expedient of pasteboard, invented by Rancour, set all the company a laughing: Ragotin laughed with the rest, and swore he knew that contrivance well enough, but had a mind to keep it to himself. As for coaches,
added

added he, will it not be a novelty in a play? I formerly personated Tobit's dog, and did it so to the life, that the whole audience was highly pleased with my performance, taking me to be a real dog. As for my part, continued he, if we may judge of things by the effects they work upon our minds, I never saw Pyramus and Thisbe acted in my life, but I was less concerned at his death, than frightened by the roaring of the lion. Rancour backed Ragotin's reasons with others as ridiculous, and by that means, ingratiated himself so far with him, that Ragotin took him to supper. The rest of the impertinents left likewise the players at liberty; who, it is probable, had much rather go to supper, than entertain these idle fellows of the town.

C H A P. XI.

*Which contains what you'll find, if you'll
but take pains to read it.*

RAGOTIN carried Rancour to a tavern, where he called for the best things the house could afford. It is thought he would not carry him to his
own

own house, because his commons were but indifferent; but I will say nothing about that, for fear of passing rash judgments; neither do I care to enquire much into the truth of that business, because I do not think it worth my while, especially having matters of far greater importance to relate. Rancour, who was a person of great discernment, and knew his men at first sight, no sooner saw a brace of partridges and capon served up for two people, but he began to think, that Ragotin had some design or other, and did not treat him so well, either upon account of his own merit, or to repay the civility he had received from him, in maintaining his story to be a good subject for a play. He therefore expected to hear some new extravagance from Ragotin, who, however, did not discover his thoughts at first, but continued talking of his novel. However, he at length repeated several lampoons he had made upon most of his neighbours, some cuckolds that were nameless, and their wives that made them so. He sung drunken catches, and shewed Rancour numberless acrostics and anagrams; which are generally the first things with which your paltry rhimers begin to plague us. Rancour
made

made him a complete coxcomb, by crying up all he heard, with eyes lifted to Heaven; and swore like a losing gamester, that he never heard any thing so fine in his life: nay, he was so transported, that he made a shew of pulling off his hair in an extasy of pleasure. He told him now and then, that it was a great misfortune, that he did not leave off all other business and write for the stage; for in such a case, in two or three years time, Corneille would be no more talked of, than Alexander Hardy. I am, added he, an absolute stranger to flattery; but to encourage you, must own, I no sooner saw you, but I read in your face, that you were a great poet; and you may be satisfied by my companions, what I told them about it. I am seldom mistaken; I can smell a poet at two miles distance; and therefore as soon as ever I cast my eyes on you, I was as much acquainted with your genius, as if I had brought you up. All this fulsome stuff went down with Ragotin as glib as his wine, which now began to intoxicate his brain, as much as Rancour's commendations had swelled his vanity. As for Rancour, he eat and drank very heartily, crying out now and then, for God's sake, monsieur Ragotin, improve.

improve your talent: once more let me tell you, you are much to blame, not to make your fortune and ours. For my part, I scrawl a little paper sometimes as well as other people, but if I could make verses half so good as those you have been reading to me, I should not have been so hard put to it to keep life and soul together, but would live upon my income as well as Mondory. Therefore, monsieur Ragotin, once more, pray write; and if this next winter we do not eclipse the companies of Paris, may I never tread the stage any more without breaking one of my arms or legs. I will say no more, and so let us drink. He was as good as his word; for having filled a bumper, he drank monsieur's Ragotin's health to Ragotin himself, who pledged him after the same manner, and returned his civility with drinking the health of the actresses. This he drank cap in hand, and in such rapture, that as he set the glass down on the table, he broke its foot, without taking notice of it; however, he afterwards attempted three or four times to set it upright, but finding it impossible, he at last flung it over his head; and pulling Rancour by the sleeve, let him know he had had the honour of breaking a glass
in

in drinking a health to the ladies. It vexed him a little that Rancour did not laugh at it; but, as I said before, he was rather an envious than a risible animal. Rancour asked him, what he thought of their women?—The little man blushed, without giving an answer: but Rancour putting the same question to him again, at last, what by his fluttering, blushing, and broken speech, he gave Rancour to understand, that he liked one of the actresses extremely. But which of them? quoth Rancour. The little man was so disordered for having said so much, that he answered, I don't know—— Nor I neither, said Rancour. This reply cast him into a greater disorder, inasmuch, that, with a bewildered look, he said, It is, it is—He repeated the same words five or six times over again; at which the stroller growing impatient, cried, I like your choice, she is indeed very beautiful. This put him quite out of countenance; inasmuch, that he could never tell which he loved most, though it may be he knew nothing of the matter himself, or that his passion was rather lust than love. At last, Rancour naming miss Stella, he said, it was her with whom he was in love: for my part, I verily believe, that had he

he named either Angelica, or mother Cave, he would have forgot the blow he had received with a busk from the one, and the age of the other, and given himself body and soul to the very first that Rancour thought fit to mention. The stroller, however, made him drink a good bumper, in which the other pledged him; and looking about the room, whispered something, as though it were a great secret he was about to tell, though there was no body present, Well, your wound is not mortal, quoth Rancour, and you have addressed yourself to one who is able to cure you, provided you will be but ruled by him, and keep counsel; not but your enterprize is a little difficult; for miss Stella is a very tygress, and her brother Destiny a lion: but still she does not see men every day like you, and I know what I can do; let us drink out our liquor, for to-morrow will be the day. They drank each a glass of wine, which interrupted their conversation for a while. After this, Ragotin recounted all his accomplishments and riches, and told Rancour, that a nephew of his, was clerk to a financier; that this nephew had contracted great friendship with the partizan de Ralliere, during the time he was at Mans, to settle an excise-office there,

there, by the means of which nephew's interest he endeavoured to give him hopes that he would procure him such a pension from the king as his players in ordinary had. He told him likewise, that if any of his relations had children, he could prefer them in the church, as his niece had married the brother of a certain miss, kept by the steward of an abbot of that province, who had good livings in his gift. Whilst Ragotin was thus relating what great interest he had, Rancour, who, the more he drank, the more thirsty he grew, was still filling both the glasses, which were emptied in an instant, Ragotin not daring to refuse any thing from the hands of a man from whom he expected such services. In short, they drank about, till they had both enough. Rancour, according to his custom, grew more serious, but Ragotin became so dull and heavy, that he laid down his head on the table, and fell asleep. Rancour called one of the maids to make a bed ready for him, because no body was up at his inn. The maid told him, she had as good make two beds, as she was sure monsieur Ragotin wanted one as well as he. In the mean time he slept and snored as heartily as ever he had done in his life, notwithstanding the noise

noise they made while they were putting clean sheets on two of the three beds that were in the room; so that when the maid came to wake him, and acquaint him his bed was ready, he called her a thousand whores, and threatened to beat her. At last, Rancour, having turned him in his chair, towards the fire, at which the sheets were aired, he rubbed and opened his eyes, and suffered himself to be undressed without repining. They got him into his bed as well as they could; and Rancour, having first made the chamber-door fast, went into his own. About an hour after, Ragotin got up, for what purpose I never yet could learn. He rambled a long time about the room, not knowing where he was; and having overturned all the chairs and tables he met in his way, and tumbled himself down several times, without being able to find his bed again, he went at last to Rancour's, and pulling his bed-cloaths, made him start out of his sleep. Rancour asked him, what he would have? I am looking for my bed again, said Ragotin—It is on the left hand of mine, replied Rancour. The little drunken man, however, took the right, and thrust himself betwixt the rug and matrafs of the third bed, which had
neither

neither feather bed, quilt, nor sheets, and there he slept all night very quietly. Rancour got up and dressed himself before Ragotin waked; when he asked him, whether he chose to leave his own bed in order to sleep on straw? Ragotin was positive that he never got up, and that the room must be haunted. The inn-keeper hearing this, stood up for the reputation of his house, picked a quarrel with Ragotin, and threatened to sue him for giving it an ill name. But let us return to the strollers in the inn.

C H A P. XII.

A combat in the night.

I Am too much a man of honour not to advertise the courteous reader, that if he be offended at all the silly trifles he has already found in this book, he will do well not to go on with the reading of it; for upon my conscience, he must expect nothing else, although the volume should swell to the size of that of the Grand Cyrus: and if from what he has read, he doubts what will follow, perhaps I am in the same dilemma myself: for one chapter
draws

draws on another, and I do with my book as some do with their horses, putting the bridle on their necks, and trusting to their good conduct. As soon as their room was cleared, and Rancour had got to the inn with Ragotin, the door-keeper they left at Tours came into the inn, with a horse load of goods, and sat down to supper with them. By this person, and what they had learnt from one another, they understood that the intendant of the province could do them no harm, having had much ado to escape the hands of the boisterous mob with his fuziliers. Destiny told his comrades how he had got away in his Turkish habit, with which he designed to represent Soliman; and that being informed that the plague was at Alençon, he was come to Mans with Cave and Rancour, in the equipage we have described in the beginning of these most true, heroic, comical adventures. Stella acquainted them also with the good offices she had received from a lady at Tours, whose name never came to my knowledge; and how, by her means, she had been conducted as far as a village near Bonesta-ble, where she strained her foot as she alighted off her horse. She added that hearing the company was gone to Mans, she

she got herself carried thither in a litter, which the lady of that village had lent her with a great deal of civility. After supper Destiny alone stayed in the ladies chamber; Cave loved him as if he had been her own son; Stella was no less dear to her; and her daughter and only heiress Angelica, loved Destiny and Stella like a brother and sister. She did not yet exactly know who they were, nor upon what account they had turned players; but she had taken notice, that though they called one another brother and sister, yet were they better friends than near relations; that Destiny paid to Stella the greatest respect imaginable; that she was extreme modest and virtuous: and as Destiny had a great deal of wit, and seemed to have a liberal education, so Stella looked more like a young lady of quality, than a stroller. Now Destiny and Stella were beloved by Cave and her daughter, because they really deserved their love, both from their good qualities, and the mutual friendship which they naturally had for two players, who had as much merit as any in France, though they never had the good fortune to tread either of the two theatres in Paris, which are the *Ne plus ultra* of a French player. Those who do not understand

And these three little Latin words (which come so pat in my way, that I could not refuse to place them there) may be pleased to ask some Latinist of their acquaintance the meaning of them. To end this digression, Destiny and Stella did not scruple to express their mutual fondness before Cave and Angelica, and shew their extreme joy they had to each other after so long an absence. They related, as pathetically as they could, how uneasy they were about each other; and Destiny acquainted Stella, that the last time they acted at Tours, he thought he had spied their inveterate persecutor amongst the croud of their auditors, although he had his cloak about his face: and that as he went out of the city, not finding himself able to resist him if he had offered to attack him, he had disguised himself, by putting a great patch on his face. He told her afterwards, how many litters they met with when they went to fetch her; adding, he was much mistaken if their common enemy was not the same unknown person, who had searched so minutely all the litters, as you have seen in the seventh chapter. Whilst Destiny was speaking, poor Stella could not forbear shedding a few tears; Destiny was

sensibly touched with them; and having comforted her as well as he could, added, that if she would but suffer him to use the same endeavours in seeking out their enemy, as he had used, till then, in avoiding him, he would soon free her from his persecutions, or loose his life in the attempt. These last words redoubled her grief: Destiny had not courage enough to forbear grieving likewise: and Cave and her daughter, who were of a tender and compassionate temper, grieved also, either out of complaisance, or through contagion. At last Cave renewed the conversation which tears had interrupted, and reproached Destiny and Stella, that, though during the time that they had lived together, they might have been convinced how much she was their friend, yet they reposed so little confidence in her and her daughter, that they were still unacquainted with their birth and quality; adding, she had certainly met with crosses enough in her life, to enable her to advise unfortunate persons, such as they two seemed to be. To which Destiny answered, that their not discovering themselves to her, was not out of any distrust, but because he thought the recital of their misfortunes could not but be very tedious;
telling

telling her also that he would be ready to entertain her with the story of their adventures, whenever she was willing to throw time away in hearing it. Cave was glad of this opportunity to satisfy her curiosity; and her daughter, who had the same inclination, being unlaced near her, on Stella's bed, Destiny was about to begin his story, when they heard a great noise in the next chamber. Destiny stood listening a while; but the noise and squabble still increasing, and some body crying out, murther, help, murther, he, with three leaps, got out of the chamber, at the expence of a skirt, which Cave and Angelica had torn as they were going to stop him. He went into the chamber from whence the noise came, which was so dark that he could not see his own nose; and where the cuffs, boxes on the ears, and several confused voices of fighting men and women, together with the hollow noise of naked feet stamping on the floor, made a hideous and frightful concert. He ran very rashly amongst the combatants, and in one moment received a blow on one side, and a box on the other; which changed his good intention of parting those hob-goblins, into a violent thirst of revenge. He began to

set his hands a-going, and made a flourish with his two arms, by which many a black eye ensued, as it afterwards appeared. The scuffle lasted so long, that he received twenty blows more, which he however returned, with double the number. In the heat of the fight, he felt himself bit on the calf of the leg; when clapping his hands to the place, he met with something hairy, which he for that reason took to be a dog; but Cave and her daughter, who appeared at the chamber door at that interim with a candle, like the fire at St. Helmo after a storm, discovered to Destiny that he was amidst seven persons in their shirts, who having been in close conflict before, began to let one another go, as soon as the light appeared. This tranquillity, however, did not last long. The inn-keeper, who was one of the naked combatants, grappling the poet a-new; Olive, who was also amongst them, was attacked by the inn-keeper's man, who was another of the combatants: Destiny went to part them, whereupon, the hostess, who was the animal that had bit him, and whom he had taken for a dog, by reason she was bare-headed, and had short hair, flew at his face, assisted by two maids, as naked and bare-headed as herself.

herself. Their shrieks and cries filled the air once more, the cuffs and boxes made the room to ring again, and the fight grew still warmer and warmer. At last, several persons who waked at the noise, came into the field of battle, parted the combatants, and procured a second suspension of arms. Now the question was to know the occasion of the quarrel, and what fatal accident had brought seven naked persons into one room. Olive, who seemed the least concerned, said, that the poet being gone out of the room, he saw him come running back as fast as he could, followed by the inn-keeper, who seemed to have a mind to beat him; that the hostess following her husband fell foul of the poet; that as he was going to part them, a servant and two maids fell upon him; and that the light happening to go out at the same time, made the fight last longer than it would otherwise have done. Now it was the poet's turn to speak for himself: he said, that having made two of the finest stanzas that ever were written since stanzas were in fashion; and fearing to lose them, he went to the maid of the inn for a candle, which she scornfully refused to give him; whereupon, the inn-keeper called him a rope-dancer; which

he returned by calling him a cuckold. He had no sooner spoke this last word, but the host, who was within reach, gave him a blow on the chops; as soon as the blow was given, the inn-keeper's wife, his man and his maids rushed upon the strollers all together, who received them with as good as they gave. This last encounter was more fierce and obstinate than either of the other two. Destiny having closed with a lusty wench, and tucked up her smock, gave her a thousand slaps on the buttocks; Olive, who saw the company pleased with it, did the same to the other maids. The inn-keeper was busy with the poet; and the hostess, the most furious of all the combatants, was seized by some of the spectators; which made her fly into such a violent passion, that she cried out thieves! thieves! Her cries awaked la Rappiniere, who lived over against the inn. He caused the door to be broke open; and judging by the noise he heard, there could be no less than seven or eight people killed, he parted the fray in the king's name; and having learnt the cause of all the disturbance, exhorted the poet not to make any more verses in the night-time, and went near to beating the inn-keeper and his wife, for
giving

giving a hundred abusive names to the players, whom they called shew-men and tumblers, swearing also to turn them out of doors the next day; but la Rappiniere, to whom the inn-keeper owed money, threatening to arrest him, his mouth was stopped in a moment. La Rappiniere, after the fray, went home, the rest returned to their chambers, and Destiny to that of the players, where Cave desired him not to defer any longer relating the history of his, and his sister's adventures. He told her, he was ready to satisfy her curiosity, and began his relation as you shall find in the following chapter.

C H A P. XIII.

The history of Destiny and Stella.

I Was born in a village near Paris, and might make you believe I came of a very illustrious family, since no body can disprove what a stranger says of himself; I am too generous, and too much a lover of truth, to deny the meanness of my extraction. My father was one of the most topping and substantial men in his village: I have often heard him say, that he

was a poor gentleman's son; that he had spent his youth in the wars; having got nothing but dry blows and empty pockets, he betook himself to the service of a very rich Parisian lady, in the quality of her gentleman usher; that having scraped together a sum of money in this place, (because he was also steward and caterer of the house, and had the knack of emptying his mistress's purse to fill his own pockets) he married an old waiting-woman of the family, who died soon after, and left him all she had got in her service, Being soon weary of the condition of a widower, and no less that of a servant, he married a country-woman, who furnished his lady's house with bread: and it is to this last marriage that I owe my birth. My father was called Gariquet; what country he was of, I could never yet learn; and as for my mother's name, it signifies nothing to my story. Let it suffice, that she was as covetous as my father, and my father as covetous as she, and that they had both a pretty large conscience. My father had the honour of being the inventor of the piece of flesh tied with a string to the pot-handle, which having boiled a considerable time, may be taken out again, and serve several times

times to make soup. I could tell an hundred more particulars of his good husbandry, which gained him, with justice, the reputation of a man of wit and invention; but for fear of being too tedious, I will content myself with relating only two, which may seem incredible, though they are most certainly true. He had bought up a great quantity of corn, with a design to sell it very dear, in case the year should prove bad; but the harvest being plentiful, and corn falling in its price, he was so possessed with despair, and the devil, that he had an inclination to hang himself. One of his neighbours, who happened to be in the room when he entered upon that noble design, and had hid herself for fear of being seen, was not a little surprized, when she saw him dangling from one of the joists of the cieling. She immediately ran to him, to cut the rope; and, by the help of my mother, who came in at her crying, got it from his neck: perhaps they repented the doing of so good an action, for he beat them both the same day, and made the poor woman pay for the rope she had cut, by stopping some money he owed her. His other prank is no less strange: he grudged himself what ever he eat, and

his wife being brought to bed of a boy, the fancy took him, that she had milk enough to nourish both her son and himself; and hoped, that by sucking his wife he should save bread, and live upon a food of easy digestion, My mother's wit was much inferior to his, though her avarice was as great; however, though she did not invent things as my father did, yet having once conceived them, she put them in execution with more exactness than he. She therefore tried to nourish both her son and husband with her own milk, and ventured also to feed upon it herself, with so much obstinacy, that the little innocent creature was soon starved to death; and my father and mother were so weakned, and famished, that when they returned to meat, they surfeited themselves and fell both sick upon it. Sometime after my mother went with child of me, and having happily brought forth a most unhappy creature, my father went to Paris, to desire his mistress to stand godmother to his son, together with an honest churchman, residing at his village, where he had a benefice. As he was returning home in the evening, to avoid the heat of the day, and passed through a great street in the suburbs, the houses whereof were for the most

most part then, building, he saw afar off by the moon-shine, somewhat that glittered in his eyes, as he was crossing the street. He did not think it worth while to enquire what it was; but hearing the groans of one in pain, at the same place where what he had seen vanished out of his sight, he boldly entered one of those unfinished buildings, where he found a woman sitting alone on the ground. The place she was in, received sufficient light from the moon, to let my father perceive that she was very young, and very richly dressed, having on a gown of silver tissue, which was the glittering thing my father saw the moment before. You must not question that my father, who did not want resolution, was less surprized than the young lady; for she was in a condition, that nothing worse could happen to her. This consideration gave her the assurance to speak first and tell my father, that if he was a Christian, he should take pity on her; that she was in labour, ready to be brought to bed, and that the maid she had sent for a trusty mid-wife, not returning, she had slipped away from her house without waking any body, her maid having left the door open, that she might come in again without making any noise. She

had scarce made an end of this relation, when she was delivered of a child which my father received into the lappet of his cloak. He acted the midwife as well as he could, and the young lady conjured him to carry away the little creature with all speed, to take care of it: and not to fail two days after, to go to an old churchman she named to him, who would give him money, and all necessary orders for nursing the child. At this word money, my father, who had a penurious soul, was going to display all the eloquence of a gentleman usher, but she would not give him time; she put into his hands a ring, as a token to the priest he was to go to from her; she caused him to swaddle the young creature in her handkerchief, and sent him away in haste, notwithstanding his unwillingness to leave her in that condition. I am inclined to believe, she had much trouble to get home again. As for my father, he returned to his village, gave the child to his wife, and did not fail, two days after, of going to the old priest, and shewing him the ring. He learnt from him, that the child's mother was a young lady of a very good family, and very rich; that she had this child by a Scotch lord, who was gone into Ireland to

to raise soldiers for the king's service; and that this foreign nobleman had promised her marriage. The priest also told him, that by reason of her precipitate delivery, she was fallen desperately sick; and being in that extremity, had confessed all to her father and mother; who instead of chiding endeavoured to comfort her, as she was an only child: that the thing was as yet a secret in the house, and therefore she assured my father, that if he would but take care of the child, and keep the secret, his fortune should be made. Upon this he gave him fifty crowns, and a bundle of all sorts of things necessary for a child. My father returned home after he had dined peaceably with the priest. I was put out to nurse, and the stranger kept at home in my stead. A month after, the Scotch lord came back; and having found his mistress so very ill, that she could not live much longer, he married her one day before she died, and so was no sooner a husband, than a widower. He came two or three days after to our town, with the parents of his wife. There they began to weep a fresh, and were like to stifle the child with kisses; my father had reason to be thankful to the Scotch lord for his generosity, and the relations of the child
did

did not forget him also. They returned to Paris very much satisfied with the care my father and mother took of the boy, whom they would not yet take home with them, because the marriage was still kept secret, for some reasons which never came to my knowledge. As soon as I was able to walk, my father took me home, to keep the young earl of Glaris company (for after he was called by his father's title). The natural antipathy said to be between Jacob and Esau in the very womb of their mother, was never greater than that which was between the young earl and me. My father and mother loved him tenderly, and had an aversion for me, tho' I was the more hopeful boy of the two: there appeared nothing but what was mean in him. As for me, I seemed to be what I was not, and rather an earl's son than Gariquet's; and if am at last no more than a wretched player, it is undoubtedly, because Fortune had a mind to be revenged upon Nature, for designing to make me something without her help; or, if you please, because Nature is sometimes willing to favour those whom Fortune is unkind to. I shall pass over in silence, the infancy of two young clowns, (for Glaris was such by education as well as myself) since our most memorable

ble adventures were nothing but a scene of continual contentions. In all the quarrels we had, I always got the better, except when my father and mother sided with him, which they did so often, and with so much heat, that my godfather, Monsieur Saint Sauveur by name, was highly offended at it, and demanded me of my father. He made him a present of me with great joy, and my mother had yet less regret than he to part with me. Thus I was at my godfather's well clad, well fed, much carested, and never beaten. He spared no cost to make me read and write; and as soon as I was fit to learn Latin, he obtained of the lord of our village, who was a very benevolent gentleman, and very rich, that I should study with two of his sons, under a learned man he had from Paris, and to whom he gave a very good salary. This gentleman, the baron d'Arques by name, took great care to have his sons well educated. The eldest, called Saint Far, was a personable man, but as untractable rough and brutish in his nature, as ever man was. To make amends, the younger brother was both handsomer than Saint Far, and had a vivacity of mind, and greatness of soul equal to the beauty of his person. In short, I do

do not think there ever was a more hopeful youth than Vervelle, for this was the younger brother's name. He honoured me with his friendship; and, as for me, I loved him as a brother, and respected him as a master. As for Saint Far, he had no other but ill inclinations; and I cannot better express the sentiments he had both for his brother and me, than by telling you, that he loved his brother as little as he did me. His diversions were different from ours, for he liked nothing but hunting, and hated books; whereas Vervelle seldom went a hunting, and took great delight in reading: in this part of his disposition, I agreed wonderfully with him, as I did in every thing else, without being put to the trouble of doing any thing out of complaisance, as in duty I ought. The baron d'Arques had a large library of romances: our tutor, who had never read any in college, and who, at first, forbid us the reading of them, having condemned them a hundred times before the baron d'Arques, to render them as odious to him, as he found them delightful, grew at last so much in love with them himself, that having devoured both the old and new ones, he confessed that the reading of good romances, was as instructive, as pleasant,
and

and no less proper to inspire young people with noble sentiments, than the reading of Plutarch. He therefore encouraged us to read them, as earnestly as he had discouraged us before, and first of all advised us to peruse the modern; but these were not yet suitable to our palates; and till we were fifteen, we were much more delighted with *Amadis de Gaul*, than any of the more fashionable romances that have been made since; by which the French have shewn to the world, that if they do not invent so much as other nations, yet do they nevertheless bring the inventions of others to a far greater perfection. We therefore bestowed upon the reading of romances, the greatest part of the time we had allowed us for diversion. As for Saint Far, he called us the philosophers, and went abroad every day either to hunt, or beat the poor country fellows, which he did with wonderful success. The inclination I had to do well, gained me the favour of the baron d' Arques, who loved me no less than if I had been his near relation. He would not suffer me to leave his sons, when he sent them to the academy, but sent me with them, and that rather as a companion than a servant. There we stayed about two years to learn
our

our exercises; at the end of which, a man of quality related to the baron d' Arques, raising soldiers for the Venetians, Saint Far, and Vervelle persuaded their father to let them go to Venice with their kindsmen. The good old gentleman desired I would still accompany them, and monsieur de Saint Sauveur, my godfather, who loved me extremely, gave me very generously bills of exchange for a considerable sum, to make use of, in case those I had the honour to accompany should be unwilling to bear my charges. We went the longest way about on purpose to see Rome, and the other fine cities of Italy, in each of which we stayed a considerable time. I fell sick at Rome, and the two brothers proceeded on their journey; the gentleman under whose conduct they were, being desirous to lay hold on the opportunity of the pope's galleys, which were putting out sea to join the Venetian army, near the streights of the Dardanelles, where they waited for the Turks. Vervelle was extremely sorry to leave me, and I almost mad to part from him, at a time, when by my services I might, in some measure, have deserved the love he had for me. As for Saint Far, I believe he left me with as much indifference

as

as if he had never seen me; and I never thought on him, except as being brother to Vervelle, who left me as much money as he could spare; but whether Saint Far consented to this generosity, I cannot tell. Thus I was left sick at Rome, having no other acquaintance except my landlord, a Flemish apothecary, who took great care of me during my illness, and who, as far as I can judge, had more skill in physic than the Italian doctor who assisted. At last I recovered, and gathered strength enough to go and view the most remarkable places in Rome, where strangers find every where objects, to entertain their curiosity. I took a singular delight in viewing the Vines, (thus are called several gardens, finer than the Tuilleries in Paris, which cardinals and other persons of quality keep with much cost in Rome, rather out of vanity than for their own entertainment, as they never, or, at least, very seldom go there themselves.) One day as I was walking in one of the finest, I saw, at the turning of the wall, two women very genteely dressed, whom two young Frenchmen stopped, and would not let go, unless the youngest unveiled her face. One of those two Frenchmen, who looked like the master of the other, had

had even the insolence to offer to unveil her by force, whilst his man held the other, who was bare-faced. I was not long debating what I should do on this occasion, but presently told those rude men, that I was resolved not to suffer them to offer violence to the ladies. They were both very much surprized, for I spoke with such resolution, as would have daunted them, even had they been armed as I was. The two ladies put themselves under my protection, and the young Frenchman, chusing rather to be baulked than beaten, told me as he went off, that, for all my hectoring, he should meet me in some other place, where our swords should decide the controversy. I answered, I would not hide myself: his man followed him, and so I stayed with the two women. She that had no veil on, seemed to be about five and thirty: she returned me thanks in good French, without any mixture of Italian, and told me amongst other things, that if all Frenchmen were like me, the Italian women would not scruple to live after the French fashion. After that, to reward the service I had done them, she added, that since I hindered the rude Frenchman from seeing her daughter against her will, it was reasonable

sonable I should see her of her own accord ; therefore, said she, Leonora, lift up your veil, and let the gentleman see that we are not altogether unworthy of the honour of being under his protection. She had scarce done speaking, but her daughter put aside her veil, or rather discovered a sun which dazzled my eyes. I never beheld so beautiful an object in my whole life ; she cast three or four times her eyes on me, as it were by stealth ; and as they still met with mine, the innocent blushes which overspread her face, made her look, to me, as handsome as an angel. I perceived the mother was very fond of her, for she seemed to share the pleasure I had in gazing upon her. Now, as I was little used to these adventures, and as young people are easily put out of countenance in strange company, I made them but an indifferent compliment when they went away, and gave them, perhaps, but an indifferent opinion of my understanding ; I was angry with myself for not asking their address, and that I did not offer to wait upon them thither ; but as it would be preposterous to run after them, I went to the door-keeper to enquire whether he knew them ; who at last, rather by signs than otherwise, gave me
to

to understand, that they were unknown to him, at least he would not own that he knew them. I returned to my Flemish apothecary, in a very different disposition of mind from what I was in when I came out; that is to say, very amorous, and very much in pain to know whether my beautiful Leonora was a courtesan or a woman of reputation; and if she had as much good sense as her mother, who seemed to have a great deal. I abandoned myself to thought, and flattered myself with a thousand hopes, which entertained me a while; but disquieted me much more, when I considered the impossibility of my wishes. Having framed a thousand frivolous designs, I resolved at last to seek them out, not thinking it possible for them to remain long invisible in Rome, (which is not a populous city,) especially to a man so much in love as I was. That very day I looked for them wherever I thought it most likely to find them, and returned home at night, more tired and uneasy than I was when I went out. The next day I sought them with still more diligence, yet did nothing but tire and disquiet myself. By my peeping through the lattice-windows, and my hasty running after all the women that bore the
least

least resemblance of my Leonora, I was taken a hundred times, both in the streets and in the churches, for the greatest fool among those Frenchmen who have contributed most to make Frenchmen ridiculous. It is matter of wonder, how I could gather strength at a time, when I suffered so much from sickness: however, my body recovered, whilst my sick mind remained so divided betwixt honour and love, which kept me at Rome, that I often doubted whether I should obey the frequent letters I received from Verville, who conjured me by the ties of friendship, to come to him, without using the rights he had to command me. At last, all my endeavours to find out my unknown lady, proving ineffectual, I paid my landlord, and got my little equipage ready, in order to depart. The day before I was to set out, signior Stephano Vanberge (for so was my landlord called) told me, he designed to give me a dinner at a mistress's house of his, and at the same time make me confess, that he had not made an ill choice for a Fleming; adding withal, that he would not carry me to her before I was to go away, because he was a little jealous. I promised to wait on him, rather out of complaisance than

than inclination; and accordingly he went about dinner-time. The house he went into had neither the appearance nor furniture of an apothecary's mistress. Having traversed a very fine parlour, we entered a magnificent room, where we were received by Leonora and her mother. You may imagine how much I was agreeably surprized. The mother of that beautiful daughter came towards me, to be saluted after the French way; and I must own, that she kissed me, rather than I her: I was so amazed, that I could scarce see, neither did I hear one word of the compliment she made me. At last I recovered both my senses and sight, and saw my Leonora herself more beautiful and charming than before, but had not the assurance to salute her. I was sensible of my fault as soon I had committed it; but instead of repairing it, blushed as much out of shame, as she did out of modesty. Her mother told me, she designed to return me thanks before I went away, for the pains I had taken to find out their habitation; and this still increased my confusion. She brought me into a private room adorned after the French fashion, where her daughter did not follow us, because, I suppose, she did not think it worth

worth her while to join conversation with so dull a fellow as I seemed to be. She stayed with signior Stephano, whilst, with her mother, I acted the part of a clown to the life. She was so civil, as to keep up the conversation by herself; which she did very ingeniously; though nothing can be more difficult, than to shew one's wit with those that have none. For my part, I never was such a blockhead in my life; and if she was not tired of my company, she never could be so with any company whatsoever. Amongst other things, to which I scarce answered, yes, or no, she told me she was a French woman, and that signior Stephano would inform me of the reasons which kept her at Rome. By this time, dinner being ready, she was obliged to lead me along to the table; for I was so disordered, that I did not know how to set one foot before the other. I was the same dull fellow both before and after dinner; during which, the only thing I did with assurance, was to stare upon Leonora. I fancy she was uneasy at it, and therefore to punish me for it, never lifted up her eyes all the while. Had the mother been silent, the dinner had been like a Carthusian meal; but she discoursed with signior Stephano about the affairs of

Rome, at least I fancy so, for I am not very sure of it to this hour. At last we rose from table, to the great comfort of every body, except myself, whose distemper grew worse and worse every moment. When we went to take our leaves, they said a thousand obliging things to me, which I only answered with the ordinary compliments used at the bottom of a letter: however, I did something more at parting than I did when I came in, for I saluted Leonora, and by that means compleated my ruin. Stephano was not able to get one single word from me all our way home. I locked myself up in my room, without pulling off either my cloak or sword. There I revolved in my mind what had happened to me. Leonora presented herself to my fancy, more beautiful than ever she had appeared in my sight. I remembered how dull and silent I was before the mother and daughter; and as often as I thought on it, was so ashamed, that I could not forbear blushing. I wished to be rich, cursed my mean extraction; and then fancied to myself, a thousand lucky adventures, advantageous both to my fortune and love. At last, having nothing in my thoughts but how to frame a plausible pretence to stay, and not

not finding any to my liking, I grew so desperate, as to wish to fall sick again, to which I had already no small disposition. I designed to write to Leonora; but all my pen could produce did not please me, and so I put into my pocket the beginning of a letter, which perhaps I had not dared to send, had it been finished. Thus, having disquieted myself to little purpose, and not being able to banish Leonora from my thoughts, I resolved to go by the garden where she appeared to me at first, to abandon myself entirely to my passion, and pass by her door to take a final farewell. The garden was well situated in one of the remotest parts of the city, and in the midst of several old uninhabited buildings. As I passed along, -pensive and melancholy under the ruins of a portico, I heard somebody stalk behind me, and at the same time felt myself run through the body. I presently faced about, and instantly drew my sword; and finding I had to do with the servant of the young Frenchman I mentioned before, I was like to return him at least as good a pass as he had made at me by treachery: but as I pushed at him without being able to close with him, because he maintained a running fight, and en-

deavoured to parry, his master came out from among the ruins of the portico, and attacking me behind, dealt me such a stunning blow on the head, and a great thrust in the thigh, as made me fall to the ground. There was no likelihood of my escaping at so cheap a rate, but because in an ill action people seldom preserve a presence of mind, the servant wounded his master in the right hand; and at the same time two Minim friars of the Trinity of the mount passing by, and seeing me treacherously assaulted, ran to my assistance; whereupon the assassins made their escape, and left me wounded in three several places. Those good friars happened to be Frenchmen, to my great comfort; for, in so remote a place, had an Italian seen me in the condition I was in, he would rather have avoided than succoured me, lest being found doing me a good office, he should be suspected of being himself my murderer. Whilst one of these charitable friars received my confession, the other ran to my lodging, to acquaint my landlord with my disaster: he came instantly to me, and caused me to be carried, half dead, to my bed. With so many wounds, and so much love, it was no wonder if I soon fell into a most violent

violent fever. My life was despaired of by all, and I had no reason to hope its continuance. In the mean time, my passion for Leonora was so far from abating, that it was rather increased, though my strength grew still weaker and weaker. Wherefore, not being able to support so heavy a burthen, and yet resolved not to die, without letting Leonora know, that it was for her sake only that I wished to live, I called for a pen and ink. They thought I was light headed; but I was so earnest in protesting that they would drive me into despair in case they should deny me what I requested, that signior Stephano, who had taken notice of my passion, and was so clear sighted as to guess at my design, gave orders that I should have all things necessary to write; and as he knew my intention, he stayed all alone in the room. I perused what I had scribbled a little before with design to make use of some thoughts which came then into my head upon the same subject, and then wrote thus to Leonora.

“ I no sooner saw you, but it was out of my power to forbear loving you; my reason did not oppose my passion, but told me, as well as my eyes, that you was the

most lovely person in the world ; whereas it should have represented to me, how unworthy I was of your heart. However, that would have served only to exasperate my disease with unprofitable remedies, and after having struggled awhile, I must at last have yielded to the irresistible necessity of loving you, which you impose on all that see you. I love you, my charming Leonora ; but with so much respect, that you ought not to hate me for it, although I have the boldness to discover it to you : but how is it possible to die for you, without boasting of it ? and how can you refuse to pardon a crime, with which you cannot reproach me long ? I own your being the cause of a man's death is a recompence not to be merited, but by a great number of services ; and you will, perhaps, envy me an happiness, which you procured me without design. But do not grudge it me, lovely Leonora, since it is no more in your power to make me lose it, and that it is the only favour I ever received from fortune, who will never sufficiently reward your merit, but by procuring you adorers as much above me, as all other beauties in the world are below you. Therefore, I am not so vain as to think that you will bestow the least sentiment of pity on—"

I was not able to make an end of my letter; my strength failed me on the sudden, and the pen fell from my hand, for my mind went so fast, that my body could not keep peace with it; else that long beginning you have heard, had been but a small part of my letter; so much was my imagination warmed by my fever and my love. I was a long time in a fainting fit, without giving the least sign of life; which signior Stephano perceiving, he opened the chamber-door to send for a priest. At that very moment Leonora and her mother came to visit me, having, it seems, been informed of my being wounded. Now, as they thought this accident befel me upon their accounts, and for that reason that they were the innocent cause of my death, they did not scruple to come to see me in the condition I was in. My trance lasted so long, that they went away before I was come to myself, very much afflicted, as one may imagine, and fully persuaded, that I would never recover. They read what I had been writing; and the mother being more curious than the daughter, perused also the papers I had left on the bed; amongst which there was a letter from my father. I was a long time strug-

gling betwixt life and death; but at length youth getting the upper-hand, in a fortnight's time I was out of danger; and in five week's time began to walk about the room. My landlord entertained me often about Leonora. He acquainted me with the charitable visit she and her mother had made me; at which I was over-joyed: and if I was a little troubled at their reading my father's letter, I was highly pleased that my own had been read also. As often as I happened to be alone with Stephano, I could talk of nothing but Leonora. One day, calling to mind what her mother told me, that he could inform me who she was, and what reasons obliged her to stay in Rome, I desired him to acquaint me with what he knew of the matter. He acquainted me, that she came to Rome with the French ambassador's lady; that a man of quality, a near relation of the ambassador's, had fallen in love with her; that after a time she loved him too, and that being married clandestinely, she had the beautiful Leonora by him: he informed me likewise, that that nobleman had fallen out with all his relations upon this account, which obliged him to leave Rome and go to Venice with madame la Boissiere

Boissiere (for this was her name) till the time of the ambassy should be expired; that having brought her back to Rome, he furnished her a house, and gave her all necessaries to live like a person of quality, whilst he stayed in France, whither his father had called him back, and whither he durst not carry his mistress, or, if you please, his wife; well knowing, that none of his relations would approve his match. I must confess, I could not sometimes forbear wishing, that Leonora was not the legitimate daughter of a person of quality, that the blemish of her birth might excuse the meanness of mine; but however, I soon repented so criminal a thought, and wished her fortune answerable to her merit. This last thought cast me into despair; for as I loved her more than my life, I plainly foresaw, that I could never be happy without enjoying her, nor enjoy her without making her unhappy. When I began to recover, and that there was no other remains of my distemper, than a great paleness in my cheeks, occasioned by the vast quantity of blood I had lost, my young masters returned from the Venetian army, the plague which infected all the Levant, not suffering them to signalize their courage there any longer.

Verville had still the same affection he ever had for me, and Saint Far did not yet shew he hated me, as he has done since. I recounted to them all my adventures, except my falling in love with Leonora; both expressed a great desire of being acquainted with her, which my exaggerating the merit both of the mother and the daughter encreased. A man ought never to commend the person he loves, before those who may love her also, since love enters at the ears as well as the eyes. This folly has often been pernicious to those who have been guilty of it, which my own experience will justify, as you shall shortly see. Saint Far asked me every day when I designed to carry him to madame la Boissiere : one day, when he was more pressing than ordinary, I answered, I could not tell whether she would admit of his visit or not, because she lived very retired; nay, replied he, I now plainly see you are in love with her daughter; and added, he knew how to go see her without me, after a very blunt manner. I was so daunted, that he then firmly believed, what he barely suspected before. Afterwards he passed an hundred silly jests upon me, and put me so out of countenance, that Verville pitied me. He
took

took me away from his unmannerly brother, and carried me to the Corso, where I was extremely melancholly, though Verville, out of a kindness extraordinary in a person of his age, and so much above me by birth, used all possible means to divert me. In the mean time, the ill-natured Saint Far, endeavoured to satisfy himself, or rather ruin me. He went straight to madame la Boissiere; where they took him at first for me, because he had my landlord's servant with him, who had often accompanied me thither; but had it not been for that, I believe he had never been admitted. Madame la Boissiere was very much surprized to see a man she did not know: she told Saint Far, she could not imagine upon what score, a stranger did her the honour of a visit. Saint Far replied very humbly, that he was the master of a young fellow, who was so happy as to be wounded in her service.

Having begun his compliment with an account, which, as I was informed since, pleased neither the mother nor daughter; and these two ingenious persons, being unwilling to hazard the reputation of their wit, with a person, who at once discovered he had little, the rude impertinent

was meanly diverted by them, and they very much tired with him. But what made him almost mad, was, his being denied the satisfaction of seeing Leonora's face, though he had begged her a thousand times to lift up the veil she commonly wore, as all unmarried ladies do at Rome. At last this accomplished courtier being tired with tiring of them, rid them of his troublesome visit, and returned to signior Stephano's with little advantage from the ill office he had done me. Ever since that time, as it is ordinary with ill-natured persons to hate those whom they have injured, he despised me to that degree, and disoblged me so often, that I had a hundred times forgot the respect I owed to his quality, if Verville, by his constant friendship, and repeated kindnesses, had not made me amends for his brother's brutality. I was not yet acquainted with the ill office he had done me, though I often felt the effects of it; I found, indeed, madame la Boissiere more reserved to me, than when we were first acquainted; but being still as civil as before, I did not take notice of my being troublesome. As for Leonora, she appeared very thoughtful before her mother; but when not observed by her, methought,

methought she was not so melancholly, and cast on me more favourable looks than I could have expected.

Destiny was thus relating his story, and the actresses listening very attentively, without shewing the least inclination to sleep, when they heard the clock strike two. Mrs. Cave put Destiny in mind, that the next day he was to accompany monsieur la Rappiniere to a house about two or three leagues out of town, where he promised to give them the diversion of hunting. This made Destiny take his leave of the players, and retire to his own chamber, where in all probability he went to bed: the other players did the same, and the remaining part of the night was spent in quiet; the poet, as luck would have it, having made no new stanzas to disturb the general repose.

C H A P. XIV.

How the curate of Domfront was carried away.

THOSE who have had so much spare time to throw away upon the reading of the foregoing chapters, may remember, if they have not forgot it, that the curate of Domfront was in one of those litters, which met four in a company in a little village, by an accident which perhaps had never happened before; though every one knows four litters may sooner meet together than four mountains. This curate then, who lodged in the same inn where our players quartered, having had a consultation of the physicians of Mans about his disease, and being told by those grave doctors in very elegant Latin, that he was troubled with the gravel, which the poor man knew but too well before; and likewise having dispatched some business which never came to my knowledge: this good priest, I say, having done all this, set out from that inn about nine o'clock in the morning, to return to the spiritual conduct of his flock. One of his nieces, dressed like

a gentlewoman, but whether she was for or not, signifies little; placed herself at the fore part of the litter, at the good man's feet, who was very thick and short. A peasant, by name William, led the fore-horse by the bridle, by special order from the curate, for fear he should stumble; and the curate's servant, one Julian, took care to drive the hinder; which was however so restive, that he was often obliged to push him forward with his shoulders. The curate's chamber-pot, which was of yellow brass, and glittered like gold, having been newly scoured in the inn, hung on the right side of the litter, which made it look more magnificent than the left, which was only adorned with a hat in a pasteboard case, which the curate had received from the Paris messenger, for a gentleman of his acquaintance, who had a house near Domfront. About a league and a half from the town, while the litter jogged leisurely on in a hollow way, fenced on both sides with thick hedges, as strong as walls, three horsemen, seconded by two men on foot, stopped the venerable caravan. One of them, who seemed to be captain of the rest, with a most terrible voice cried, Death and furies, the first man thar offers
to

to speak a word, I'll shoot him through the head; and with that clapped the muzzle of his pistol within two inches of William, the country-fellow's nose, who led the horse litter. Another did the like to Julian, and one of the foot-pads levelled his gun at the curate's neck, while he slept very quietly in the litter; by which means he was freed from the terrible fright that had seized his little peaceful retinue. These villians drove the litter with more haste than the dull horses that carried it were willing to make. Never was silence better observed in so violent an action: the curate's niece was more dead than alive; William and Julian wept, without daring so much as to open their mouths, daunted by the terrible apparition of fire-arms; and the curate slept on, as I said before. One of the horsemen detached himself from the main body, and went on full gallop. In the mean time the litter reached a wood, at the entrance of which, the fore horse, which perhaps was as much frightened as his leaders, or else out of spite, because they had forced him to go a quicker pace than his dull and heavy constitution would permit him, put his foot into a wheel-track; where he fell a flouncing so fiercely,

fiercely, that the curate waked at the noise; and his niece tumbled down from the litter on the lean buttocks of the jade. The good man called Julian, who durst not so much as answer him; he then called his niece, who was not such a fool as to open her mouth; and the peasant being as hard-hearted as the rest, the curate fell into a passion in good earnest. Some relate he swore an oath, but I can hardly believe such a thing of a curate of Lower Mayne. The curate's niece had by this time raised herself up again from the horse's buttocks, and sat in her place, without daring to look on her uncle; and the horse having, with great vigour, disengaged his feet, went on faster than ever he did, notwithstanding the curate's screaming out stop. His repeated cries scared the horses, which ran still the faster, and made the curate cry out still the louder. Sometimes he called Julian, sometimes William, and oftener than the rest his niece, to whose name he added the epithet of double whore and bitch into the bargain. However, she might have spoke if she had been willing; for the man who made her observe so religious a silence, was gone to meet the horsemen who rode before, about

about forty or fifty yards from the litter. But the fear of the carabine, made her insensible of her uncle's hard words; who seeing himself so obstinately disobey'd, began at last to howl and cry out, help, murther. And now the horsemen who rode before, and whom the footmen had called back, came to the litter, and made it stop; when one of them cried out in a terrible voice to William, What fool is that, that makes such a noise in the litter? Alas, sir, answered William, with fear and trembling, you know that better than I. The horseman gave him a sound knock on the pate with the but end of his pistol, and presenting the muzzle to his niece, commanded her to unmask, and tell her who she was. The curate, who from his litter beheld all this, and who had a law-suit with a gentleman in his neighbourhood, de Laune, by name, thought it was he that had a mind to murther him—and cried out, Monsieur de Laune, I summon you before God Almighty, to answer for my murther if you kill me: I am a consecrated priest, though an unworthy one, and I'll have you excommunicated. In the mean time his niece pulled off her mask, and shewed the horseman a wild staring face, which he

he did not know. This produced an unexpected effect. That passionate gentleman discharged one of his pistols into the flank of the horse that carried the fore part of the litter, and with the other shot one of his footmen in the head; saying, let all that give false intelligence have that for their pains. And now it was, that the curate and his retinue's fears began to redouble: he demanded their confession. Julian and William fell on their knees, and the curate's niece kept close to her uncle. But those who put them in that terrible fright, were already gone from them, and made the best of their way, as fast as their horses could drive, leaving to their charge the body of the fellow that was shot. Julian and William got up, still shaking with the remains of their fears, and told the curate and his niece, that the troopers were gone. They were obliged to unharness the hindermost horse, to set the litter upright; and William was sent to the next town to get another horse. In the mean time the curate was at a loss, what to think of these accidents: he could not imagine, why they left him without robbing him; nor, for what reason the horseman had killed one of his own men; at which, however,

however, he was not so much offended as at the loss of his poor murdered horse, which, in all probability, had never quarrelled with that stranger. Upon the whole matter, he concluded that it was de Laune, who had designed to murder him, and said, he would have his revenge. His niece maintained, that it was not de Laune, whom she knew very well; but the curate had a mind it should be him, that he might have an opportunity of inditing him for an assault, hoping to get him condemned upon the deposition of some witnesses, whom he expected to find at Goron, where he had many relations. At length Julian espying another company of men on horseback making towards them, betook himself to his heels as fast as he could. The curate's niece seeing Julian upon the flight, thought he had some reason for it, and therefore scampered away also; which put the curate entirely beside himself, not knowing what to make of so many extraordinary accidents. At last, he himself, espied the horsemen whom Julian had seen before; and, still worse, saw them coming directly towards him. This troop was composed of nine or ten horsemen, in the midst of whom was a wretch bound hand and foot, on a
little

little sorry horse, with a pale downcast look, like one that was carrying to execution. The curate began to say his prayers, recommending himself to God's mercy, and not forgetting the horse that was left alive: but he was very much surprised, and comforted at the same time, to find that it was la Rappiniere with some of his men. La Rappiniere asking him what he did there, and whether it was he that had killed the man that lay dead near the horse's side, the curate told him the whole adventure, still affirming, that it was de Laune that had way-laid him, of which la Rappiniere made a verbal process at large. One of his archers went to the next village, to get the dead body removed, and returned with the curate's niece and Julian, who by this time had recovered their fright, and had met William with a fresh horse for the litter. The curate returned safe to Domfront, where, as long as he lives, he will relate how he was set upon, and carried away. The dead horse was eaten up by the wolves, or mastiff dogs; the body of the dead man was buried I know not where; and la Rappiniere, Destiny, Rancour Olive, la Rappiniere's mirmidons, and the prisoner, went back to Mans. This

is

is the success of la Rappiniere and the strollers hunting, who caught a man instead of a fox.

C H A P. XV.

ACharlatan's arrival at the inn. A continuation of the history of Destiny and Stella. A serenade.

YOU may be pleased to remember, that in the foregoing chapter, one of those that set upon the curate of Domfront, left his companions, and went full gallop we know not whither. Now, as he was spurring on in a deep and narrow way, he espied, afar off, some men on horseback, making directly towards him; he would have wheeled about to shun them, but turning too short, and with more haste than good speed, his horse sprung up so suddenly, that he fell down backwards with the rider under him. La Rappiniere and his fellows observing this, thought it was very strange, that a man who came in such haste towards them, should endeavour to avoid them with the like speed. It gave them therefore just cause of suspicion, especially la Rappiniere, who

who was very susceptible in his own nature; besides, his office obliging him to make the worst interpretation of things in dubious cases, his suspicion encreased to a high degree, when he came near the man who had one leg under the horse, for he took notice that he was not so much terrified at his fall, as at the person before whom he fell. Now considering it could be no prejudice to him to aggravate his fright, and knowing how to discharge his office, as well as any provost in France, he drew near, and said to him, What! you are caught, my friend are you? Well, I'll take care you shall not get such another fall. This amazed the poor fellow much more than the fall had done; when la Rappiniere and his harpies saw in his countenance such visible signs of guilt, that any other officer less forward than he would have arrested him without any more ado: he therefore commanded his men to help him up, and bind him hand and foot on his own horse. He soon afterwards met the curate of Domfront in the disorder you have read of, with a man murdered, and a horse shot through, which confirmed him still more in his suspicions, to which the prisoner's great disorder and change of colour, was no small addition. Destiny surveyed

veyed him more earnestly than the rest, imagining he knew him, tho' where he had seen him he could not perfectly call to mind. He went on ruminating all the way he rode, and strove to awake his drowsy memory; yet could not remember where he had seen this suspected person. At length they arrived at Mans, where la Rappinere committed the supposed malefactor to prison, whilst the strollers who were to open their stage the day following, retired to their inn, to get all things in readiness for that purpose. They were reconciled to the innkeeper; and the poet, who was as generous as any poet in the world, would needs treat them to a supper. Ragotin, who was then in the inn; for he could not refrain from going there, ever since he had been smitten with the beauties of Stella, was invited by the poet amongst the rest; this poor poet was even so much a fool, as to invite also those that had been spectators of the combat, which had been fought the night before betwixt the players and the innkeeper's family, in their shirts and smocks. A little before supper began, the jolly company was farther encreased by the arrival of a Charlatan and his retinue; which consisted of his wife, an old negroe maid, a monkey

key, - and two footmen. Rancour had an acquaintance with the personage of a long standing, and therefore there past great civilities between them: nor would the poet, who was easily acquainted with people, part with him or his wife, before he had prevailed upon them, by many high compliments, which sounded loud, and signified little, only to come and honour him with their presence at supper. Well, sup they did, where nothing happened that was remarkable, only they drank plentifully, and eat proportionably. Ragotin fed his eyes on Stella's face, which intoxicated him more than the liquor he swallowed. He spoke but very sparingly all the while they were at table, tho' the poet gave him a fair opportunity of wrangling, flatly condemning Theophile's verses, of whom Ragotin was a great admirer. The actresses engaged a while with the operator's wife, a Spanish woman, and very agreeable. They afterwards withdrew into their chamber, whither Destiny waited on them, to continue and end his story; which Cave and her daughter died with impatience to hear. Stella in the mean time was studying her part, when Destiny having taken a chair near the bedside, whereon Cave and her daughter sat,

went on with his history after the following manner.

Hitherto you have found me very amorous, and much in pain, to know what effect my letter had wrought on Leonora and her mother's minds ; you shall find me more in love yet, and in the greatest despair. I waited every day on madam la Boissiere and her daughter, so blinded with passion, that I did not take notice of the coldness of their reception, nor did I consider that my too frequent visits became importunate. Madame la Boissiere was weary of my company, ever since Saint Far acquainted her who I was : yet she could not civilly forbid me the house, after what I had suffered on her account. As for her daughter, if I might judge by what she did since, I may say she pitied me, though contrary to her mother's will, who kept so watchful an eye over her, that we could never have an opportunity of meeting in private. To speak the truth, though this fair virgin was much less cold to me than her mother, yet durst not she shew me the least token of her favour before her mother ; so that I was on the rack, and my assiduity served only to make me the more hateful to those whom I designed to please. One day
madame

madame Boissiere having received letters from France, which obliged her to go abroad as soon as she had read the contents of them, she sent immediately for a coach, and signior Stephano to accompany her, not daring to go alone after the unlucky rencounter, wherein I had engaged on her account. I was myself nearer at hand, and more fit to be her attendant, than the gentleman she had sent for; however, she would not accept of the least service from a person, whom she intended speedily to be rid of. As luck would have it, Stephano was not to be found; so that she was compelled to shew before me, how uneasy she was, that she had nobody to go with her, that I might have an opportunity to offer myself; which I did with as much joy, as she could have regret to be obliged to take me along with her. I conducted her to a certain cardinal, who was then protector of the French, and who by good fortune gave her audience upon the first motion she made. The business was doubtless of great importance, and no small difficulty; for she was a long time with him in a private grotto, or covered fountain, in the midst of a fine garden, whilst all the cardinal's followers walked

into those parts of the garden they liked most. Now was I got into a large walk of orange-trees alone with the beautiful Leonora, a blessing I had often wished for in vain; and yet was more modest and timid than ever I had been. I cannot tell whether she took notice of it, or whether it was her goodness which made her speak first to me after this manner; My mother, said she, will have just reason to quarrel with Stephano for failing us to day, and troubling you to wait here so long. And I am infinitely obliged to him, replied I, for procuring me, though without design, the greatest happiness I ever hope to enjoy. I have too many obligations to you, said she, to omit any thing that may prove to your advantage; therefore, pray let me know wherein the happiness consists you mention, that I may share your joy, if it be such as will not offend a modest ear. I fear, said I, you will make that joy cease—I! answered she; no, I never was envious of any man's prosperity, much less of a person's who has ventured his life on my account. It is not your envy that I fear, answered I—What other motive, returned she, can there be to make me oppose your felicity? Your disdain, said I. I shall be

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much

much perplexed, added she, till you let me know what I should disdain, and which way this disdain may concern you. I could soon unfold this riddle, said I, but I cannot tell whether you will be pleased to understand it. Do not let me hear it then, replied she; for when we have such doubts, it shews the thing is not to be easily understood, or is such as may displease. I must confess, I have admired a hundred times since, how I was able to answer her, my mind being less intent upon what she said, than full of fears of her mother's return, and losing the opportunity of entertaining her with my passion. However, at last, I mustered up all my assurance, and, without prolonging a conversation, which did not carry me fast enough to the point I aimed at, I told her, not minding her last words, That I had long sought an opportunity to speak with her, thereby to confirm what I had presumed to express in my letter; which yet I durst not have undertaken, but from my knowledge that she had seen it. To this I added a great deal of what I had written, and said moreover, that, being upon my departure to serve the pope in the war he was making on some princes of Italy, and re-

to die there, since I found myself unworthy of her; I would intreat her only to tell me, what sentiments she would have entertained of me, had my fortune been answerable to the ambition I had to love her. She told me with a blush, that my death would not be indifferent to her; and therefore, added she, if you are still in the same obliging disposition towards your friends, do not let us lose one who has been so serviceable to us; or, at least, if you will needs die, for some greater reason than what you have just now expressed; yet defer your death, till we have seen each other in France, whither my mother and myself are suddenly returning. I pressed her to explain, more clearly, the sentiments she had for me; but her mother was by this time come so near us, that she could not have satisfied me, if she had intended it. Madame la Boissiere looked but coldly upon me, perhaps, because I had an opportunity of entertaining her daughter, who likewise seemed somewhat uneasy. This made me to stay but a short time with them, after their being returned home. I left them, highly pleased with my adventure, putting the best interpretation on Leonora's answer I could.

The

The next day I omitted not to wait upon them according to my custom; but was told they were gone abroad, and the same answer I received for three days together, for I was not discouraged by the first or second denial. In fine, signior Stephano advised me to go no more, because madame la Boissiere would not suffer me to see her daughter; adding, he took me to be a man of more sense, than to expose myself to a refusal. Then he acquainted me with the reason of my disgrace. Leonora's mother had caught her writing a letter to me, it seems; having severely reproved her for which, she afterwards gave strict orders, that her people should always deny their being within, whenever I came to pay my visit to them: and then I likewise discovered the ill office Saint Far had done me; and that, ever since that time, the mother had been very much displeased with my visits. As for the daughter, Stephano assured me, my personal merit would have made her wave my mean birth and fortune, could she but have gained her mother's consent; who was too haughty and covetous to be persuaded to it. I shall not trouble you with the misery this unwelcome news occasioned me: I was as much concerned at it,

as if I had injustice done me in being refused by Leonora, though I never durst hope to have the least possession of her heart: I railed at Saint Far, and had some thoughts of fighting him; but then considering how much I had been obliged to his father and brother, I had no other refuge but my tears. I wept like a child, and was ever uneasy, but most of all in company. Now came on the sad moment of our departure, and I was forced to go away, without taking my last farewell of Leonora. We made a campaign in the pope's army, where I courted death as much as I could; but wherein fortune disappointed me, as she had ever done in my other attempts. I could not meet that death which I sought for, but gained reputation I aimed not at, though I had been proud of it at any other time: I could cherish nothing, but the pleasing remembrance of Leonora. Verville and Saint Far were at length recalled to France by the baron d' Arques, who received them like a father that doted on his children. My mother gave me a very indifferent reception; and as for my father, he dwelt at Paris, with count Glaris, who had chosen him governor to his son. The baron d' Arques, who had
been

been made acquainted with my feats of arms in the war of Italy, where I had saved Verville's life, desired to have me live with him in the quality of a gentleman, and companion. He gave me leave to visit my father at Paris, where I almost found less welcome, than I had done from my mother. Any other person in his situation, that had had a son so accomplished as myself, would certainly have presented him to the Scotch earl, but my father carried me out of his house in great haste, as if he feared I should disgrace him : as he went about the streets, he reproached me for being too fine ; told me, I seemed proud, and that it were better for me to learn a trade, than thus to strut about with a sword by my side. You may imagine, this discourse sounded but harsh in a young man's ears, that had been well educated, and gained some reputation in the wars, and who besides had dared to love a handsome young lady, and declared his passion to her. I must freely own, the sentiments of love and respect, which a son owes to his father, could not make me refrain from looking on him as a very troublesome old man. He led me about through three or four several streets, with the same civility and caressing expressions,

and then shook me off abruptly, charging me not to come near him any more. I was willing enough to obey this last injunction, and therefore quitted him, to go and wait upon monsieur de Saint Sauveur, who received me like a father indeed, and blamed my own parents for their unnatural treatment; promising also, never to abandon me. The baron d'Arques had some business, which obliged him to go and dwell at Paris. He took up his lodgings at the farther end of the suburbs of Saint Germain, in a very stately house, that had been lately built with many others, which have rendered that place the finest part of the city. Saint Far and Verville made their court to the king, went to the Thuilleries, or to visit, as all young men of quality do in that vast city. For my own part, when I waited not on them, I frequented all the fencing-schools to keep my hand in use; or went to the play-house; which is, perhaps, one reason, why I am now a tolerable actor. Verville took me aside one day, and told me he was fallen deeply in love with a young lady that dwelt in the same street. He informed me she had a brother, by name Saldagne, who was as jealous both of her, and another sister under his tuition, as if he

he had been their husband. He told me also, he had made no small progress in his amour, having persuaded her to give him admittance by night into their garden, the back-door whereof opened into the fields, as ours did likewise. Having made me his confidant, he desired me to accompany him, and use all my rhetoric to gain the favour of the woman that was to attend her. Verville had shewed me all along such friendship, that I could not reasonably refuse him any thing: so we went out at our garden back-door about ten o'clock at night, and soon after were admitted into the garden, where the mistress and the maid waited for us. Poor madame Saldagne trembled all over, and durst not speak; Verville's courage was little better; the waiting woman was as mute as a fish; and I, who only came to accompany Verville, spoke not a word, neither had I any desire to talk. At last, Verville summoned his courage to his aid, and led his mistress into a close walk, having first laid a strict charge upon the waiting woman and myself to play the centinels part, which we observed so religiously, that for a long time we walked together, without speaking one word to each other. At the end of the alley we

met the young lovers : Verville asked me aloud, whether I had entertained the maid as she deserved ? I replied, I thought she had no reason to complain. No, in truth, answered ~~she~~, for he has not yet spoke one word to me. Verville laughed, and assured her, that I was worth her conversation, though I was somewhat melancholly. Madame Saldagne said, that her woman was not to be despised ; and thereupon those happy lovers left us again, only bidding us be sure that nobody came to surprize them. I then prepared myself to be plagued with the chat of a waiting woman, who I expected would now examine me about my wages, what acquaintance I had among the chambermaids in the parish, how many new catches I could sing, and what vails I had with my master. After this, I imagined she would acquaint me with all the secrets of Saldagne's family, and tell me both his faults, and his sister's ; for there are few servants that meet, without giving one another a full account of all they know of their masters and mistresses : but I was not a little surprized, to find myself in discourse with a waiting woman, who began thus ; I conjure thee, thou dumb spirit, to tell me, whether thou art a serving
man,

man, or not; and if thou art one, by what admirable virtue hast thou forborne thus long to slander thy master? I was amazed to hear a chamber-maid talk at that extraordinary rate; and so asked her, by what authority she took upon her to exercise me? I perceive, said she, thou art a stubborn spirit, and that I must repeat my conjuration. Tell me therefore, rebellious spirit, by the power given me over all proud and self-conceited serving men, tell me who thou art? I am a poor young fellow, answered I, that would fain be now asleep in my bed. I find, replied she, it will be no easy matter for me to know: yet this much I clearly discover, that thou hast little of a courtier in thee; for, continued she, shouldst thou not first have broken silence in an humble address; then have taken me by the hand, entertained me with bagatelles, suddenly struggled for a kiss, attempted my breast, till thou hadst been beaten off with three or four boxes on the ear, as many kicks behind, and numberless scratches on the face; and then have returned home with scars of honour, and the marks of an amorous adventurer? There are some maids in Paris, said I, interrupting her, whose marks I would be proud to bear; but

but there are others whom I should dread to look upon for fear of dreaming of the devil. What! thou thinkest me then, said she, perhaps one of those scare-crows. But, good sir, don't you remember, that, in the dark, all cats are grey? True, replied I, but I'll never do that in the dark, which I may repent when the light appears. But if I be handsome, said she, what then? Then I have shewn you less respect than you deserve, replied I: for if your beauty be equal to the charms of your wit, you deserve to be served and courted by the nicest rules of gallantry. And couldst thou serve a lady according to the nicest rules? said she. Better than any man living, replied I, provided I loved her. What matters that, said she, so she loved you? Nay, both must join issue, where I engage in an amour, replied I. Truly, said she, if I may judge of the master by his man, my mistress has made no indifferent choice in Verville; and that waiting maid, whom thou shouldst condescend to love, would have no little cause to be proud of herself. It is not enough to hear me talk, said I; you must see me too. I believe both may be better let alone, replied she—We were obliged to end our conversation here; for monsieur Saldagne

Saldagne knocked hard at the street-door, which they made no great haste to open, as his sister might have time to slip up into her chamber. The poor lady and her woman went away in such haste and disorder, that they did not so much as bid us adieu when they shut us out of the garden. Verville, when we got home, would have me go to his chambers. I never saw a man so much in love, and so well pleased: he extolled the wit of his mistress, and told me, he should never be satisfied till I had seen her. He kept me there all night, repeating every thing she had said over and over so often, that I could not get to bed till break of day: For my own part, I was surprized to have met with so much wit in the conversation of a waiting-maid; and must confess, I had a sort of itching desire to know whether she was handsome or not, though the memory of my Leonora made me very indifferent towards all the good faces I saw every day at Paris. Verville and I slept till noon; and as soon as he waked, he wrote to madame Saldagne, and sent the letter by his footman, who was acquainted with her woman. This fellow was of Lower-Britany, of a very disagreeable figure, and a worse understanding.

When

When I saw him going, it came into my head, that if the party, whether waiting-woman, or chamber-maid, whom I had entertained with chat the night before, should see him in that horrid form, and discourse with him, she could not certainly mistake him for the person that waited on Verville. This great block-head did his message well enough for such a creature; having found out madame Saldagne with her other sister, called Madame Lery, whom she had entrusted with Verville's love to her. As he was waiting for an answer, they heard monsieur Saldagne humming upon the stairs. He was coming to his sister's chamber, who hastily conveyed the footman into a cloaths-press. However, the brother made no long stay with his sister, and so the fellow was restored to the open air again. Madame Saldagne locked herself up in her closet a while, to answer Verville's letter, whilst madame Lery discoursed with the servant, whose conversation, I doubt, had but very little entertaining. Her sister having made an end of her letter, released her from our messenger, by sending him back with a billet, wherein, she promised to meet Verville that night, at the same time and place

place as before. As soon as it was night, you may imagine, Verville was ready to go to the place of assignation: we were admitted into the garden, and it fell to my lot to cope with the same person I had entertained before, and whom I found to be very agreeable. She expressed more wit this second time, than she had done the first; and both her accent and manner was so charming, that I confess I wished she might be as handsome as she was ingenious. In the mean time, she could not believe me to be the Breton she had seen before; nor could she apprehend why I should have so much more wit by night than by day; for having heard the fellow relate that monsieur Saldagne's coming into his sister's chamber had put him into a great fright, I took it upon myself, and played upon her with it, assuring her, that I was not then in so much fear for myself, as for madame Saldagne. This put it out of all dispute, that I was the same ill-favoured rogue; and I observed afterwards, that she began indeed to discourse like a chamber-maid. She then informed me that monsieur Saldagne was a terrible man; that having lost both father and mother in his youth, being master of a great estate, and having few relations, he exercised a
great

great deal of tyranny over his sisters, to make them turn nuns; using them, not only like an unjust father, but like a jealous insupportable husband. I was about to take my turn, and tell a story of the baron d' Arques and his sons, when the garden door, which we had not made fast, was of a sudden thrown open; when in comes monsieur Saldagne, attended by two footmen, one of whom carried a lighted flambeau in his hand. He came from a house which stood in the same row with his and ours, where they gamed every day, and where Saint Far usually went to pass away the time. They had both played there that evening, and Saldagne having lost his money betimes, was coming home by his garden, contrary to his custom, and there surprized us, as I told you, finding the door open. We were, at that time, all four together in a covered walk, which gave us an opportunity of shunning his and his servants observation. The young lady remained in the garden, upon pretence of taking the fresh air; and to give it the better colour, began to sing, though she had little inclination to it, as you may easily imagine. In the mean time, Verville having scaled the wall, by the help of a
vine-

vine-arbour, jumped down on the other side ; but a third footman of Saldagne's who was then coming in, seeing him leap, failed not to run and give his master notice of his seeing a man leap from the garden-wall into the street. At the same instant I fell down with a great noise into the garden ; the same arbour, by means of which Verville had made his escape, unfortunately yielding under me. This noise, together with the fellow's tale, alarmed all that were in the garden. Saldagne ran to the place from whence the noise came, followed by his three men ; where spying a man with his sword drawn, (for as soon as I could get up I put myself into a posture of defence) he attacked me at the head of his company ; but I soon made him know that I was no easy conquest. The fellow that carried the flambeau, advanced farther than the rest, which gave me an opportunity of seeing Saldagne's face, which I presently knew to be the same Frenchman's that would have murdered me at Rome, for having hindered him from being rude to Leonora, as I have before related. He knew me likewise at first sight, and made no doubt but that I was come thither to take a just revenge. He therefore cried out, You shall

shall not escape me now, I assure you. I had almost broke one of my legs with the fall ; however, I maintained a running fight, till I retreated into a summer-house, whither I saw Verville's mistress run in just before, in the utmost consternation. She stayed within, though she saw me enter ; but whether she wanted time or courage to go out, I know not. For my part, my resolution encreased, when I considered they could attack me only at the summer-house door, which was very narrow. I wounded Saldagne in one of his hands, and the boldest of his footmen in his arm, which procured me a little respite ; yet I still lost all hopes of escaping, believing they would at last make shorter work with me, and dispatch me with pistols, having found it too difficult to be done with swords. But Verville came to my relief : he would by no means go home without me ; and having heard the bustle and clashing of swords, he ventured to bring me off from the danger he had brought me into, or at least to share it with me. Saldagne, with whom he had already made an acquaintance, thought he came to his aid, as a friend and neighbour. He took it as a great obligation, and accosting him, said, You see sir, how

I am set upon in my own house. Verville, who understood his meaning, immediately replied, he would be his servant against any other man, but that he came to protect me against all the world. Saldagne, enraged to find himself mistaken, swore desperately, he did not doubt but to make his party good against two such villians himself; and at the same time, charged Verville most furiously, but was however repulsed by him with a great deal of gallantry. I now thought it high time to get out of the summer-house and join my friend. Having seized the lacquey that carried the flambeau, and being loth to kill him, I contented myself with giving him only a back stroke on the head; but this frightened him so much, that he ran off from the garden into the fields, crying out all the way, Thieves, thieves. The other footmen fled likewise; and Saldagne fell into a hedge at the same instant that the light left us, either wounded by Verville, or by some other accident. We did not, however, think fit to help him up, but concerted our own escape with all imaginable haste. Saldagne's sister fearing some violence from her rash brother, stepped out of the summer-house, where I saw her, and, melting

melting into tears, begged softly that we would take her along with us. Verville was over-joyed to have his mistress in his power, and under his protection. We found our garden-door half open as we left it; nor as yet would we make it fast, lest we should have some other sudden occasion to go out. In this garden there was a pretty summer-house, painted, and neatly adorned, where we used to regale ourselves in hot weather, and which stood at some distance from the body of the house. My young masters and myself sometimes practised fencing there; and this being the most delightful place about our house, the baron d'Arques, his sons, and myself, had each of us a key to it, that we might go in at pleasure, and keep out the servants, lest they should damage the books, or spoil the furniture. In this place we locked up our charge, whose grief would admit of no comfort. I told her we would only leave her for a few moments, to consult her safety and our own, and then immediately return. Verville was a quarter of an hour before he could wake his country footman, who had been drinking. As soon as he had lighted a candle, we consulted on a proper place to hide the lady; and at last resolved to lead

lead her to my chamber, in the upper part of the house, as being frequented by no body but myself and a servant that belonged to me. We then returned back to the summer-house with our light; when Verville starting back at his entrance, so very much surpris'd me, that I had not time to ask what ailed him; nay, scarce to put out the candle, before Verville cried, Who goes there? His brother, Saint Far, answered, it is I; what the devil do you do here in the dark at this time of night? I was talking with Garigues, said Verville, because I am not yet sleepy. I am here upon the same account, returned Saint Far; therefore pray let me have the room a little to myself. We did not trouble him to ask that favour twice; but I stealing out the lady as dextrously as I could, by thrusting myself betwixt her and Saint Far, who was entering at the same time, carried her off to my chamber, bewailing her fate in a most lamentable manner. I then went down to Verville's room, where his man was striking a light; and was there told by my young master, with grief in his face, that he must of necessity return again to Saldagne's. What to do? said I; would you kill him out right? Alas!

my

my poor Garigues, said he, I shall be the most unhappy man in the world, if I do not get madame Saldagne from out of her brother's hands. What! can she be there still, and in my chamber too, replied I? Would to God that were true, said he, sighing. I fancy you dream, returned I. No, no, I do not dream, we have brought away her eldest sister instead of her. Why, replied I, were you not both in the garden together? Nothing more certain, said he. Why then will you return to her brother's to endanger yourself again, since that sister you are in pain about is now safe in my chamber? Ah! Garigues, cried he again, I knew well enough what I saw: and so do I likewise, quoth I; and to prove your mistake, do but come up and see madame Saldagne. He told me I was a madman, and followed me with the greatest concern in the world. But my astonishment equalled his grief, when I found in my chamber a gentlewoman I never saw before, and not the same with her I brought from the other house. Verville was as much amazed as myself, but more satisfied by far; for, contrary to expectation, he now found himself with his mistress, and confessed his mistake: but
I

I could make him no answer, neither was I able to comprehend by what enchantment, a lady whom I had been with all the while, should, on a sudden, be transformed to another, in the time we went from the summer-house to my chamber. I looked earnestly upon her, and thereby assured myself that she was not the same person whom we brought from Saldagne's. Verville perceiving my surprize, What's the matter, says he? I tell you once more, that I myself was mistaken. Nay, said I, it is I that am in an error, if madame Saldagne came hither along with us. With whom could she come else, replied he? I know not, nor nobody else, said I, unless it be the lady herself. Nor can I tell with whom I came myself, said madame Saldagne, unless it were with that gentleman, pointing to me; for, continued she, it was not monsieur Verville that brought me away from my brother's, but a man that came into the garden immediately after you went out, and summoned thither, I suppose, either by my brother's groans, or the footman's outcries. He caused my brother to be carried into his chamber; which my waiting-woman having informed me of, and withal assured me that he was my brother's acquaintance,

and a neighbour; I went and stayed for him in the garden, where I conjured him to take me away with him till the next day, when I designed to retire to a lady's of my acquaintance, where I would stay till my brother's fury was over; which, I told him, I had all the reason in the world to dread. This person was so civil as to offer to conduct me whither I pleased, and promised to protect me, even against my brother, at the hazard of his life. It was under his conduct I came to this house; where Verville, whose voice I knew, spoke to the same man; and, immediately after, I was brought up to this chamber, where you now see me.

This account from madame Saldagne, though it did not clear all my doubts, yet it assisted my comprehension in discovering the cause of this fortunate event. As for Verville, he was so intent upon viewing his mistress, that he scarce minded what she said. He began to tell her a thousand soft things, without troubling himself to know which way she came into my chamber; and I, leaving them together, took a candle, and went back to the summer-house, resolved on speaking to Saint Far, however blunt and captious, as usual, he might receive me.

But

But I was not a little surprized to find, instead of him, the same gentlewoman, whom I was certain I had brought myself from Saldagne's : and what yet encreased my wonder was, to see her in great disorder, and like one who had suffered some horrid insult. Her cap was torn to tatters, and her handkerchief bloody, as was likewise her face : Verville, said she to me, as soon as I appeared, approach me not, unless it be to take away my life, wherein you will find less difficulty, than in offering a second violence to my honour; for as Heaven has given me strength to resist your first attempt, so I doubt not of an ability to revenge the second : is this, added she weeping, that passionate love you professed to my sister ? Oh ! how dear I pay for my compliance with her follies ? But, when we act contrary to our duty, it is but just we should undergo what most we stand in fear of. But what do you meditate upon now ? pursued she, perceiving my astonishment ; do you feel a remorse of conscience for your base action ? If so, I can forget it with all my heart : you are young ; and I must own it was a great piece of folly in me, to trust myself to the discretion of one of your years : conduct me therefore to my

again, I conjure you ; for, passionate and severe as he is, I dread him less than I do you, who are a brutish monster, and such an insatiable enemy to our family, that, not satisfied with seducing a young lady, and murdering a gentleman, you would still commit a more wicked action to gratify your hatred.

Having made an end of her speech, which she uttered with great vehemence, she wept so bitterly, that I never in my life beheld a person more afflicted. The judgment I had retained, amidst all this confusion, was now lost ; and if she had not ceased to speak of her own accord, I never should have interrupted her, so much was I astonished at the authority of her expostulations. But perceiving she had done speaking, madam, replied I, neither am I Verville, nor is he, I can assure you, capable of such a base action as you complain of. What ! said she, are you not Verville ? Did not I see you engaged with my brother ? Did not a gentleman come to your assistance ? And did not you bring me hither on my entreaty, where you have offered a rudeness, impious both to my honour and my youth ? She could say no more, so much her grief oppressed her heart. For my part, I
never

never was so perplexed, and could not apprehend how she should both know Verville, and not know him at the same time. I told her, I was an absolute stranger to the rudeness she complained of; and that since monsieur Saldagne was her brother, I would conduct her, if she pleased, to the same place where her sister was. These words were scarce out of my mouth, when Verville and madame Saldagne entered into the room where we were, she being absolutely resolved on going back to her brother's; but what put this dangerous resolution into her head I know not. The two sisters embraced each other as soon as they met, and renewed their flowing tears, as if they were contending who should weep most. Verville earnestly entreated them to return to my chamber, laying before them the difficulty of getting into their house after the great alarm the whole family had been in; adding withall, the danger of exposing themselves to their brother's fury, the safety of the place they were in, and how near it was to break of day; which being once come, they might enquire how all things went at Saldagne's, and then could resolve what was most convenient to be done. Verville easily

persuaded them to condescend to this proposition; and they finding themselves secure in each other's company, we all went up to my chamber; where having examined the strange accidents which perplexed us, we were as apt to believe, as if our eyes had been witnesses, that Saint Far had certainly made an attempt upon madame Lery's honour; Verville and myself knowing him capable of the like and worse actions.

We were not deceived in our conjectures. Saint Far had been gaming in the very house where Saldagne had lost his money, when passing by his garden a little after the scuffle, he met Saldagne's footman, who related to him what had befallen his master, who, they said, had been set upon by seven or eight rogues, thereby to excuse their own cowardice for leaving him in the lurch. Saint Far thought himself obliged to offer him his service as a neighbour, and did not leave him till he had seen him carried to his bed-chamber; after which, madame Saldagne intreated him to protect her against her brother's fury, and came along with him as her sister had done with us. He intended to secure her at the same summer-house where we were, as I said before; and

and he being as much afraid lest we should see his lady, as we were careful he should not see ours; the two sisters by this accident meeting, just as he was coming in, and we going out, I happened to catch his lady by the hand; whilst he laid hold by a like mistake upon mine; and thus the ladies were exchanged. This was the more easily done, because I had put out my candle; and the ladies were so terribly frightened as well as we, that they knew not in the hurry what they did. As soon as we had left the summer-house, Saint Far finding himself alone with a very handsome lady, and, having more instinct than reason; or, to describe him in his natural colours, being more of the brute than the man; he took advantage of the opportunity, without minding the consequence, and was regardless of what an irreparable affront he offered to a lady that had thrown herself into his arms for protection. But his brutality was rewarded as it deserved. Madame Lery defended herself like a lioness; she bit him, scratched him, and smeared him all over with blood: after which, he went up to his bed, and slept as soundly as if he had done the best action in the world.

You may wonder, perhaps, how madame Lery happened to be in the garden at the time we were surprized by her brother, since there was nobody there but her sister and her waiting-woman. This at first puzzled me as well as you ; but at last I learned from them both, that madame Saldagne, not daring to trust her waiting-woman with the secret of her amours, had persuaded her sister to attend her in the garden ; and this was the person I entertained under the title of Maudlin. Here my wonder was at an end, how a chamber-maid could be mistress of so much wit as I found in her conversation ; and madame Lery told me, she was no less puzzled to find me so witty in the garden by night, and such a block-head by day, when she mistook me for the dull Breton. Ever after that we entertained sentiments for each other something above a bare esteem ; and I dare say she was not less satisfied than I, to find our conditions more equal, than if either of us had been a mercenary servant.

The day appeared while we were yet talking ; so we left our ladies in my chamber, where they might sleep if they pleased, whilst Verville and I went to consult.

consult what was next to be done. For my part, having no such love-fancies to disturb my breast as Verville had, I was almost dead for want of sleep; but that was no reason for abandoning my friend while such a load of business oppressed him. I had a footman, as subtle and witty as Verville's valet de chambre was dull and blockish; I gave him what instructions I could, and sent him to make discovery how affairs stood at Saldagne's. He performed his message very discreetly, and informed us that Saldagne's servants reported, the thieves had desperately wounded their master. As for his sisters, there was no more mention made of them, than if they never had existed; but I knew not whether this silence proceeded from a want of regard for them, or because he gave positive orders to his servants not to speak of them, as a precaution to stifle any scandalous rumour. I see here must be something of a duel after all, said Verville; nay, perhaps something of a murder, replied I: whereupon I acquainted him that Saldagne was the same bully who had endeavoured to murder me at Rome, and how we came to know one another in the garden; adding withall, that, if he did but imagine, as

there was all likelihood in the world, that I lay there in wait to take my revenge of him; then certainly he could not at all suspect the intelligence between his sisters and us. I went to give an account to those fair ladies of our discoveries; and in the mean time, Verville visited Saint Far, to sound his sentiments, and discover the truth of our suspicions. He soon perceived his face full of scratches; but whatever question Verville put to him, he could get no other answer, than, as he came from the gaming-house; he found Saldagne's garden-door open, his house in an uproar, and himself very much wounded in the hands of his servants, who were carrying him to his chamber. A very strange accident, said Verville; no doubt but his sisters will take it much to heart. They are very handsome ladies, and I must go and visit them. What's that to me? said the brute; who then began to whistle, without minding or giving any answer to whatever his brother afterwards desired to know.

Verville left him, and returned to my chamber, where I was employing all my eloquence, to comfort our fair distressed ladies. They were disconsolate, even to desperation; and apprehended the rough-
est

est treatment from their brother's jealousy and savage temper, as being a man wholly enslaved by his passions. My lacquey brought them some meat from the next cook, which he continued to do for fifteen days together; for so long were they concealed in my chamber; which was above the rest, and so much out of the common road and passage, that nobody disturbed them in the least. They could willingly have put themselves into some nunnery for shelter; but because of this adventure, had just reason to apprehend their brother would confine them longer than they should chuse to be kept there. In the mean time, Saldagne's wounds were in the fair way of curing, and Saint Far went every day to visit him. Verville did not stir out of my room; but that was not taken much notice of in the family, for he frequently passed many whole days in it, either reading to or in discourse with me. His love for madame Saldagne increased every day, neither did she love him less. Her elder sister liked me pretty well, nor was she indifferent to me in her behaviour. Not that my passion for Leonora was a whit abated, but I had no manner of hopes from her.

Some time after, Verville received a note from Saldagne, wherein he challenged him to meet him with a second in the plain of Grenelle, to decide there their quarrel with the sword ; and by the same note, he desired Verville to bring no other person but myself with him ; which made me suspect, he intended to take us both in the same trap. My suspicion was not altogether groundless, having already experienced his treachery ; however, Verville would not mind it, resolving to give him any just satisfaction, and to offer a marriage with his sister. He sent for a hackney-coach, though there were three coaches belonging to the family. We went to the place appointed, where Saldagne waited for us, and where Verville was much astonished to find his own brother his enemy's second. We omitted neither submissions nor intreaties, to bring things to a fair accomodation, but nothing less than fighting would serve the turn of those two unjust and irrational men. I was about to protest to Saint Far, how much it was against my will to draw my sword against him : but he told me bluntly, he never liked me in his life, nor could any thing endear me to him, till he had opened a passage or two in my body, with

with his sword's point, for his good will to enter at. With these words he came fiercely towards me ; I only put by his thrusts for some time, resolving, if possible, to grapple with him, and so disarm him, though with apparent danger of being wounded myself. Fortune befriended my good intention, for he soon after slipped down at my feet : I gave him time to rise ; but that which should have made him my friend, did but increase his enmity. In fine, having given me a slight wound in the shoulder, he vapoured like a bully, and cried, I think you feel me now. My patience being worn out, I pressed upon him, and having put him into disorder, got so happily within his sword, that I seized on the hilt. The man you hate so very much, said I, will now, however, give you your life.—He struggled a while to no purpose, and would not reply a word, like an obstinate rash brute as he was, though I represented to him, it was our duty to go and part his brother and Saldagne, who were grappling and rolling over one another upon the ground. But I perceived I must be more rough with him ; therefore wrenching his hand, I forced away his sword, which I threw at a great distance from him. I now
ran

ran immediately to assist Verville, who had closed with his antagonist; but was no sooner come up to them, than I saw, afar off, several horsemen galloping towards us; Saldagne was soon after disarmed, and, at the same instant, I found myself run through the back by Saint Far. I could now no longer master my resentment, and therefore returned him a thrust, that made no little wound. The baron d' Arques, his father, who came in at that moment, and saw me wound his son, now hated me as much as he had loved me before. He spurred his horse up towards me, and gave me a violent blow on the head. Those that came with him, followed his example, and jointly set upon me. I defended myself most happily against so many enemies, but must needs at last have fallen a sacrifice to them, if Verville, the most generous friend on earth, had not thrust himself betwixt them and me, at the hazard of his own life. He gave his footman a good cut over the pate, because he found him more forward than the rest. I yielded up my sword to the baron, but that could not appease him; he called me rascal, ungrateful villain, and gave me all the injurious names his anger could suggest.

gest, and even threatened to have me hanged. I boldly replied, that, as much rascal and ungrateful villain as I was, I had given his eldest son his life; nor had I offered to hurt him, till he had treacherously wounded me behind. Verville maintained to his father, I was in the right; but he said, he would never see my face again. Saldagne went with the baron d'Arques into the coach, where they had already put Saint Far; and Verville, who would by no means leave me, took me into another with himself. He set me down at one of our prince's houses, where he had many friends, and returned to his father's soon after. Monsieur d'Saint Sauveur sent a coach for me that very night, and carried me privately to his own house; where he took as great care of me, as if I had been his only son. Verville came to see me the next day, and told me, his father had been informed of the challenge by Saldagne's sisters, whom he happened to find in my chamber. He afterwards assured me, with a great deal of joy, that the business was made up, by an agreement for a double marriage to be consummated, as soon as his brother's wounds were healed, which were not in any dangerous part. That it lay

in my power to be made friends with Saldagne; and that his father's anger was appeased, who was very sorry he had misused me. He added, he wished I might soon recover, to be a sharer in their joy; but I replied, I could not find in my heart to stay in a country, where I must be continually reproached with the meanness of my birth, as his father had done to me just before; but would soon leave the kingdom, either to lose my life in the wars, or raise myself by my sword, to a condition proportionable to the sentiments of honour his noble example had inspired me with. I am apt to believe, he was concerned at my resolution; but a man in love can attend long to nothing but his own passions.

Destiny was thus pursuing his story, when the report of a gun was heard in the street, and presently after, a man playing upon an hand organ. This kind of music having never, perhaps, been used at the gate of an inn before, called all the people to their windows, that had been waked with the gun. In the meantime the organ played on, and those who were no strangers to such sort of instruments, took notice they played a church-tune. Nobody could apprehend the design

sign of so devout a serenade, which, however, was not yet acknowledged for such. But the doubt was soon cleared, by two indifferent voices ; whereof one squeaked out in a treble, and the other roared in a rumbling bass. These two catter-wallers were accompanied by the organ, and all together made such a horrid harmony, as set all the dogs a howling round about them. They sung a song that begins thus

*Our warbling notes, and ivory lutes,
Shall ravish every soul.*

After these harsh notes, they over-heard a person scolding at the singers for singing so lamentably always in one tune. The poor choristers replied, they knew not what the devil he would have them sing. Sing what you will else, said he, speaking a little louder, for I will have singing for my money. Upon this peremptory sentence, the organ changed its tone, and another anthem was sung, as devoutly as before. None of the hearers had yet dared to speak, for fear of interrupting the music; when Rancour, who could not for his life be silent on this occasion, bawled out aloud : What ! are they used here to perform divine service in the street ? One of
the

company said, they were singing the Tenebræ in good earnest: it is a nocturnal procession, adds a third: in fine, every merry fellow in the inn had his jest upon the music; neither could any guests, who was the serenading fool, nor whom he designed to compliment. In the mean time, the anthem was carrying on towards a conclusion, when ten or a dozen dogs, which had followed a proud bitch, ran in betwixt the musician's legs; and because many rivals cannot be long together without quarreling, after some snarling and grinning, they fell together by the ears on a sudden, with so much fury and animosity, that the poor musicians, to save their skins, betook themselves to their heels, leaving the organ to the dog's mercy. These immoderate lovers were so uncivil, in the heat of the scuffle, as to throw down that harmonious machine. And the consort being thus out of tune, the host ordered the inn door to be opened, intending to secure the organ from farther mischief. Whilst he and his servants were busy in this charitable office, the organist returned, accompanied by three persons, amongst whom were a woman, and a man muffled up in a cloak; this man was the very Ragotin in person, who

who, designing to serenade Stella, had addressed himself for that purpose to a little eunuch, the organist of a neighbouring church. It was this monster, neither man nor woman, that sung the treble part, and played on the organ, which his maid had brought; an overgrown chorister singing the bass; and both for the sum of two testers—such was the scarcity of provisions at that time in the plentiful country of Mayne. As soon as the inn-keeper found out the author of the serenade, he cried out aloud, on purpose to be heard by all that were at the window, Is it then you, monsieur Ragotin, that have come with your vespers to my door? you had best go to bed, and not disturb my guests at this time of night. Ragotin replied, that he was mistaken in his man, and yet spoke it so, as if he intended to discover what he seemed to deny. In the mean time, the organist finding his instrument much battered, and being a very cholerick creature, as all beardless animals are wont to be, swore to Ragotin, he would make him pay for it; Ragotin replied, he did not care a straw for what he could do: ay, but I'll make you care, said the eunuch, I will be paid my damages. Mine host and his servants gave their
votes

votes for the organist ; but Ragotin made them understand, like a parcel of ignorant fools as they were, that this was never the custom in serenades, and so went away, not a little proud of his gallantry. The musicians laid the organ on the back of the eunuch's maid, who carried it home to her master's house. He, in a very melancholy mood, followed her. The inn-doors were locked up again, Destiny wished the ladies good night, and referred the remainder of his story to the next opportunity.

C H A P. XVI.

The opening of the stage, with other matters of no less consequence.

NEXT day the players assembled early in the morning in one of those chambers they had at the inn, in order to rehearse the play they were to act that afternoon. Rancour, whom Ragotin had made confident of his serenade, which he seemingly made a difficulty to believe, told his comrades, that the little fellow would not fail to be there suddenly, to receive their applause for his refined
piece

piece of gallantry. He also maliciously entreated them, that, whenever he hinted at it, they would take no notice of it, but put him off with some other discourse. Ragotin came into the room at the same instant, and having saluted the players in general, began to mention his serenade to Stella, who at that time proved a meer wandering planet to him; for she still changed place, and never answered his questions about what time she went to bed, and how she had past the last night? This made him leave her, and address himself to Angelica; who, instead of entertaining him, studied the part she had in a play. He next went to Cave, who would not so much as look upon him. Every one of the players in their turns, exactly observing Rancour's directions, made no answer to Ragotin's questions, shifting the discourse as often as he began to mention what passed the last night. At length, pressed by his vanity, and impatient to suffer his reputation's lingering any longer, he thus spoke aloud to them all; Will you give me leave to tell you a great truth? cried he, You may do as you please, replied some one of them: why then, added he, it was I that gave you the last night's serenade. What! do
they

they give serenades with organs in this country? said Destiny. But whom did you intend it for? Was it not, continued he, for the fair lady that set so many honest dogs together by the ears? No doubt of it, said Olive, for those snarling curs would never have disturbed such harmonious music, had they not been monsieur Ragotin's rivals, and jealous of him. Another of the company would needs have his jest, and therefore said, without doubt he is in his lady's favour, and meant nothing but honourable love, since he could court her in the open street. In short, every one in the room had a fling at Ragotin, about his serenade, except Rancour, who spared him, as having the honour of being his confidant; and it is probable, this currish raillery had still employed the whole company, if the poet (who, in his nature, was as vain and ridiculous a coxcomb as Ragotin could be, and who in every thing endeavoured to gratify his pride) had not taken them off, by saying to them, in the tone of a man of quality, or rather of a false pretender to it; now you talk of serenades, I remember, that when I was married, I had one bestowed upon me, which lasted a fortnight together, and consisted of a
hundred

hundred several sorts of instruments : it made a noise all over the Marais. The genteelest ladies in the Palace Royal took it to themselves ; several beaux assumed the honour of it ; nay, a man of quality took such a fit of jealousy upon it, that he ordered his man to fall foul upon those who bestowed it. But they met with their match, for these were all my own country men, and as brave fellows as ever stood upon legs ; and besides most of them had been officers in a regiment I raised in the late insurrection of the populace in our parts. Rancour, who checked his bantering humour in favour of Ragotin, could not be so civil to the poet, whom he continually plagued. Wherefore, taking up the cudgels against this darling of the muses, he said to him, Your serenade, as you describe it, savoured more of Bedlam, or a procession of rams-horns, than of gallantry ; and therefore, probably proving troublesome to the person of quality, he sent out his footmen either to silence, or drive away the horrid noise. And what confirms me in my opinion, proceeds Rancour, is, the case of your bride, who died for age, within six months after your hymeneal solemnity, as you term it, was over : nay, but she died of a fit of histericks, said

said the poet. I say, rather of a fit of the grandmother, or great grandmother, replied Rancour : for, added he, in the very beginning of Henry the Fourth's reign, she was past having any fits of the mother, to my knowledge ; and, to let you see that I am better acquainted with her than ever you yourself were, though you tell us daily such wonders of her, I will now relate to you a passage of her life, which I am positive never yet came to your knowledge. In the court of queen Margaret — This beginning of a history drew all the company in a ring about Rancour, whom they knew to be furnished with malicious memoirs enough against all human kind. But the poet, who dreaded him exceedingly, interrupting him, cried out, I'll lay a hundred pistoles to the contrary : which abrupt defiance made the company so merry, that they laughed him out of the room. This was his usual way, by offering such wagers of considerable sums, to maintain his daily hyperboles, which amounted to the weekly quantum of a thousand or twelve hundred, besides an innumerable quantity of lies into the bargain. Now Rancour was the comptroller-general both of his words and actions, and the ascendant he had over him was so great

great, that I dare compare it to the genius of Augustus over Anthony; that is to say, like to like, without putting a brace of strollers in the scale against two famous Romans. Rancour having thus begun his story, and being interrupted by the poet, as I said before, every one earnestly intreated him to pursue it: but he excused himself, by promising to give them, another time, a faithful account of the poet's whole life, wherewith his wife's should be likewise interwoven. It was now high time to rehearse the play that was to be acted the same day in a neighbouring tennis-court. Nothing worth observation occurred at the rehearsal. After dinner they acted their play, and came off with great applause: Stella charmed the whole audience with her beauty; Angelica did not want admirers, and both of them acted their parts to the general satisfaction. Destiny and his comrades did wonderfully well; insomuch, that many of the audience who had often seen plays acted at Paris, confessed, that the king's players could hardly have outdone them. Ragoth, in his heart and mind, ratified the donative he had made of his body and soul to Stella, in the presence of Rancour, who promised him every day to persuade his mistress to accept it. Without this

promise, despair had soon made this little lawyer the noble subject of some tragical story. I cannot tell whether the men pleased as well as the ladies of Mans in their acting, as the women did the men. Nay, if I did know the truth of it, I think I should hardly discover it; but because the wisest man is not able at all times to keep his tongue at rest, I conclude this present chapter, to avoid further temptation.

C H A P. XVII.

The ill success of Ragotin's civility.

AS soon as Destiny had stripped himself of his old embroidery, and put on his ordinary apparel, la Rappiniere carried him to the common goal, because the man they had taken the day the curate of Domfront was set upon, desired to speak with him. In the mean time the actresses went home to their inn with a numerous attendance of citizens. Ragotin happening to be near Mrs. Cave, as she came out of the tennis-court where they had acted, offered her his hand, to lead her home, though he would rather have paid that civil office to his dear Stella;

Stella; he did the like to Angelica; so that he was 'squire upon the right and left. This double civility occasioned a treble inconveniency: for Cave, who had the upper hand, as in all reason she ought, was crouded to the wall by Ragotin, that Angelica might not be forced to walk in the kennel. Besides, our little figure reaching no higher than their waists, pulled down their hands so much, that they could scarce keep themselves from tumbling over him. But that which most troubled them was, his often looking behind to ogle Stella, who was talking to a brace of country-beaux that would by all means lead her to her lodgings against her will. The poor actresses endeavoured, many times, to get lose from their gentleman-usher; but he griped so fast, that they thought themselves in fetters. They desired him a hundred times to spare himself that trouble; but he only answered, excuse me, (his ordinary compliment) and griped their hands still harder and harder. They were therefore obliged to be patient, till they came to their chamber-stairs, where they hoped to be set at liberty; but Ragotin was better bred: and repeating only, excuse me, excuse me, to all they could say, he endeavoured,

deavoured, at first, to go up with them abreast, which he found impossible : then Mrs. Cave turned her back to the wall, and crept up side-ways, dragging Ragotin after her, who dragged Angelica in like manner, she dragging nothing, but laughing like a fool. Now, as an additional inconveniency, when they were within four or five steps of the chamber-door, down comes a servant belonging to the inn, with a huge sack of oats on his back, of an excessive weight, who, with much ado, so heavy was his load, bid them go down, for that he could not get up again with his burthen. Ragotin would needs argue the case with him ; but the fellow swearing bluntly, he would let fall his sack upon them, hurried them down again much faster than they had come up. Ragotin would not, however, let go his hold. The man with the oats pressed hastily upon them, which caused Ragotin to miss a step, so that he hung in the air, holding still the players by the hand, till he pulled down Cave upon him, who supported him more than her daughter, by reason of the advantage of the place. Thus she tumbled down upon him, lighting with her feet on the pigmy's belly and breast, and knocked her head so fiercely against

against

against her daughter's, that they lay all three tumbling on the floor. The fellow thinking they could not easily get up time enough, and being no longer able to support his load, lets his sack down upon the stairs, swearing and cursing like an ostler. The sack burst open with the fall, and then came in the host, who scolded like a mad man at the ostler. But as he was mad at the fellow, so the fellow was mad at the players, and they as mad at Ragotin, who was as mad as the maddest of them all, because madame Stella, coming not far behind, was witness to this disgrace, not much inferior to the late adventure of the deep crowned hat, wherein his head had been most unmercifully pent up, not to be recovered till a pair of scissars had broke the enchantment. Mrs. Cave swore a great oath, that Ragotin should never lead her again, and shewed Stella how black and blue he had squeezed her hands. Stella told her, it was a just judgment upon her, for robbing her of monsieur Ragotin, who had engaged himself to bring her back to her lodgings after the play; adding, she was glad of the mischance that had befallen him, for breaking his word. However, he heard nothing of this, being all the

while in dispute with the host, who threatened to make him pay the waste of his oats, and had already offered to beat his servant on the same account, who for that reason beat Ragotin, and called him petty-fogger. Angelica began to banter him in her turn, and reproached him with his infidelity to Stella: in fine, fortune plainly shewed how little she was yet concerned in the promises made to Ragotin, of making him gain her affection to that degree, as would render him more happy than any lover in the whole country of Mayne; nay, the countries of la Parche and Loyal added to the number. The oats were swept up again, and the actresses went into their chamber, one by one, without any farther misfortune. Ragotin did not follow them, nor can I exactly tell what became of him. Supper-time at last came, and to supper they went: after supper, every one withdrew to their respective apartments, and Destiny locked himself up with the actresses, in order to pursue his story.

C H A P. XVIII.

*The continuation of the history of Destiny
and Stella.*

I Made the foregoing chapter a little of the shortest: perhaps this will prove somewhat longer; however, I am not sure of it; but we shall see. Destiny took his usual seat, and resumed his tale after this manner. I shall finish my story as briefly as I can, fearing I have already tired you too much with the account of my life and fortune. Verville having paid me a visit, as I said before, and not being able to persuade me to return to his father's, left me, to all appearance, much troubled at the resolution I had taken, and went home; where a while after he married madame Saldagne, as Saint Far did madame Lery. She had as much wit as Saint Far had dulness; and I wonder how two persons of such unequal talents have been able to live together in the matrimonial society. In the mean time, I presently recovered, and the generous monsieur de Saint Sauveur, approving of my design of leaving the kingdom, furnished me with money for my journey;

and Verville, who did not forget me, though now married, presented me with a good horse, and a hundred pistoles. I took my journey towards Lyons, to pass that way into Italy, with design to go once more to Rome; and after having taken my last farewell of Leonora, to repair with speed to Candia, and there put an end to my wretched life. At Nevers I lodged at an inn which stood near the river; and coming thither very early, and not knowing how to spend my time till supper, I went to take a walk on the great stone-bridge, built over the river Loire. There were a couple of women walking there at the same time; one of which, who looked as if she was sick, leaned on the other's shoulder, and had much ado to crawl along. As I passed by, I pulled off my hat to them, without taking notice of their faces, and continued walking for some time on the bridge, still keeping my thoughts employed upon my misfortunes, and chiefly upon my amour. I was well enough dressed, as all those ought to be, whose quality cannot excuse an indifferent habit. When I came again near the women, I over-heard one of them say, for my part, I should believe it too, had we not heard he was dead. I cannot
tell

tell how I came to look behind me, having no reason to think they talked of me, and yet no man but myself was the subject of their discourse. I presently found the first lady to be madame la Boissiere, grown very pale and wan, and who then rested upon her daughter Leynora's shoulder. I made directly towards them, with more assurance than I had done in Rome, having improved myself, both as to my person and behaviour, during my stay at Paris. I found them so surprized and amazed, that I verily believe they would have fled from me, had madame la Boissiere been able to run; and this surprized me not less. I asked them what happy chance brought me into the presence of two persons, whom I esteemed above all the world. These words dispelled their fears. Madame la Boissiere told me, I ought not to wonder at seeing them look upon me with some astonishment, since signior Stephano had shewed them a letter, from one of those gentlemen I waited on at Rome, by which he was informed of my being killed in the war of Parma; adding she was over-joyed to find the news false, which had been so unwelcome to her. I replied, that death was not the greatest misfortune that could

befal me, and that I was going to Venice to court it, and, if possible, to spread the report of my death with greater certainty than before. They grew sad at my resolution; and the mother began to express a great deal of tenderness for me; the cause of which I could not well understand. At last I learned from herself the ground of her civility. I was now in a capacity to serve her, and her present condition would not allow her to despise and look coldly upon me as she had done at Rome. They had met with a misfortune which had put them to great streights: for having turned all their furniture into ready money, they had left Rome, with a French maid that had served them a long time, and signior Stephano's man, a Fleming like himself, who was desirous of returning to his native country. This fellow and the wench, it seems, loved each other well enough to venture a match; and yet they kept their amour so private, that nobody ever discovered it. Madame la Boissiere being come to Rewenna, went thence by water. At Nevers she found herself so very ill, that she could go no farther. During her sickness she was somewhat hard to be pleased, and her maid more unwilling to humour her than before.

before. One morning the wench and her paramour were missing; and, what was more grievous still, the poor lady's money was missing also. Her grief increased her distemper, and she was forced to stay at Nevers till she had received letters from Paris, from whence she expected a supply to proceed on her journey. Madam la Boissiere told me this sad adventure in a few words. I led them back to their inn, which was the same where I had taken up my quarters. After I had brought them to their chamber, and stood a while with them, I retired to my own, leaving them to their supper. For my part, I could not eat a bit, but thought it was at least five or six hours while I was at table. I waited upon them as soon as they had given me notice that I should be welcome. I found the mother in bed; and the daughter received me with a countenance as sad as it appeared joyful a moment before. The mother was still more sad than the daughter, and I grieved for company. We stared a while upon each other without speaking a word. At last madame la Boissiere shewed me a letter she had newly received from Paris, which cast both her and her daughter Leonora into the deepest affliction. She

expressed the reason of her grief with a flood of tears, and her daughter Leonora wept also most bitterly; which moved me so sensibly, that I thought I did not express my sense of it enough, though I proffered them all I could possibly do to assist them. I am as yet unacquainted with the cause of your grief, ladies, said I; but if my life can any way contribute to your relief, you may set your minds at rest. Tell me; therefore, madam, said I, applying myself to the mother, what I must do to serve you: money I have, if you want any; and courage likewise if you fear any enemies; and the satisfaction of having served you, is the only recompence I expect. My words and manner gave them so full an assurance of the reality of my sentiments, that their affliction was somewhat abated. Madame la Boissiere gave me a letter to peruse, wherein a gentlewoman of her acquaintance informed her, that a certain person, who was nameless, but whom I judged to be Leonora's father, was commanded to leave the court, and had retired into Holland. Thus this poor lady found herself in a strange country; without either money, or the least hopes of getting any. I made her a second proffer
of

of the small stock I had, which might amount to about five hundred crowns; and told her also that I would wait upon her into Holland, or any other part of the world she had a mind to go to. In short, I assured her, she had found in me, a person that would do her all the service she could expect from a valet, and serve and honour her like a dutiful son. I blushed extremely at the word son: but I was no more the hateful man, that had been denied admittance into their house in Rome, and to whom Leonora was invisible; for now she was much more civil, and her mother less severe. At every offer I made, she still replied, Leonora would be very much obliged to me. All was scored upon Leonora's account, infomuch that one would have taken her mother to have been only a waiting-woman that spoke in her mistress's behalf: so true it is, that the generality of the world respect people only so far as they are subservient to their own interest. I left them very much comforted, and retired to my chamber the most contented man that could be. I passed the night very pleasantly, though waking frequently, which kept me somewhat late in bed, for it was break of day before I began to sleep.

sleep. Leonora appeared to me the next day, more nicely dressed than she had the day before; and she could not but observe, that I had taken a little more care of myself. I led her to church without her mother, who was as yet too weak to go abroad. We dined together, and from that time forward were but as one family. Madame la Boissiere very thankfully acknowledged the good offices I had tendered them, and often assured me, that she would not die in my debt. I sold my horse; and no sooner had the sick lady recovered her strength, but we took a tilt-boat, and went down the river to Orleans. During the time we were on the water, I enjoyed my Leonora's conversation; nor was so great a felicity interrupted by her mother. I found her sense as charming as her looks; nor had she reason to think mine so dull as she had found it in Rome. What can I say more? In short, she was as much taken with me, as I was captivated by her; and you may witness ever since you have seen us together, how little our reciprocal affection is diminished.—What, said Angelica, interrupting him, is then Stella that Leonora? Who but she? answered Destiny. At which Stella was pleased to say, her friend

friend had reason to question whether she was that Leonora, whom Destiny had made the heroine of a romance. It is not upon that score I start the question, replied Angelica, but rather because we are ever in doubt of what we most desire. Madame Cave said; that, for her part, she had been confident it was so, even from the beginning, but desired them to wave any farther discourse till Destiny had made an end of his story, who went on thus. We arrived at Orleans; where our entrance was so pleasant, as well deserves a particular relation. A pack of scoundrels, who always wait at the water-side in expectation of strangers, to carry home their goods, crowded into our boat. There were at least thirty that offered to take up two or three little bundles betwixt them, which, however, the weakest of these lazy rogues might have carried singly under his arm. Had I been alone, perhaps I might not have been so wise as to bear calmly with their insolence. Eight of them seized upon a little bundle, not weighing much above twenty pounds; which they seemed to lift up from the ground with much trouble; and having got it betwixt them, held it aloft above their heads, upon their fingers ends. All the
the

the mob that stood by the river-side fell a laughing, and we were obliged to do so too. However, I blushed as red as scarlet to go through the whole town with such a retinue: as for the rest of our goods, which would not have loaded one porter, they employed twenty at least, my very pistols being carried in state by four lusty rogues. The order of our march at our entrance into the town was as follows: First, eight hang-dogs, either drunk, or such as ought to have been so, carried a little box behind them, as I told you before. Next followed my pistols and holsters, each carried by two porters. Madame la Boissiere, no less vexed than myself, went immediately after: she was sitting in a great wicker-chair, fastened to two poles, and carried by four watermen, who relieved each other by turns, and had an hundred impertinent jests as they went along. The rest of our goods came after her, being only a little portmanteau, and a bundle covered with canvas, which seven or eight of these rascals tossed from one to another all the way. I brought up the rear of this procession, leading Leonora by the hand, who laughed so heartily, that I could not but be delighted with their roguery in spite of myself.

myself. As we marched along, the passengers standing still, gazed upon us; and the noise they made on this occasion drew all the people to their windows and doors. At last we arrived at the suburbs, which is the road towards Paris, attended by the mob, and took up our lodgings at the sign of the Emperor. I put the ladies into a parlour, and afterwards threatened the rogues so seriously, that they were contented to take a small piece of money for their pains, the inn-keeper and his wife taking my part against them.

Madame la Boissière, whom the money I had furnished her with sooner cured than any cordials besides could have done, found herself strong enough to bear the coach; wherefore I took up three places in one that was to go the next morning; and, within two days after, we arrived safe at Paris. As we alighted at the inn, I made acquaintance with Rancour, who came from Orleans in another coach at the same time with ours. Hearing me enquire for the inn to which the Calais coach came, he told me he was just going thither himself; and if we had not hired a lodging, he would carry us to a woman of his acquaintance, who let lodgings ready furnished, where we should

should have good accommodations. We took him at his word, and found as he had told us. Their landlady was the widow of one that had all his life-time belonged to a play-house, sometimes as a door-keeper, and sometimes as a scene-man, and had often tried to act under parts, but was generally hissed off the stage. Having scraped some money together at the play-house, he furnished a house, let lodgings, took boarders, and by all this made a shift to gain considerably.

Here we took a couple of rooms, which were pretty convenient: but madame la Boissiere receiving a confirmation of the ill news she had before concerning Leonora's father, and hearing so much of the disagreeable besides, which was concealed from us, she relapsed into her former disease. This put off our journey to Holland for a while, whither she resolved to go under my conduct; and Rancour, who was going to the same country to a company of players, was contented to stay for us, upon my promising to defray his charges. Madame la Boissiere received frequent visits from one of her friends, who had waited at the same time with her upon the ambassador's lady

lady at Rome, and had likewise been her confidante, while Leonora's father made love to her. This woman acquainted her with her pretended husband's retirement, and did her several good turns during the time we stayed in Paris. I went out of door as seldom as I could, for fear of being seen by some of my acquaintance; nor did I find it a great trouble to stay within, so long as I enjoyed my Leonora's company, whose favour I gained more and more by my constant care of her mother.

At the persuasion of this woman, who, as I told you, came often to visit us, we went one day to Saint Clou, to air and refresh the sick lady: our landlady came in for one among us, and Rancour for another. We took a boat when we came to the water-side; afterwards walked in the best gardens; and, having had a small collation, Rancour reconducted the women towards the boat, whilst I stayed behind to discharge the reckoning of an unreasonable hostess, who kept me longer from them than I intended. I got off as cheap as I could, and hastened to rejoin my company; but what was my astonishment to see the boat gone a good way off from the shore, carrying my company towards

towards Paris, and leaving me behind, without any notice, or so much as my footboy who had the care of my sword and cloak. Standing at the water-side, very much troubled at their not waiting for me, I heard a great uproar in another tilt-boat which lay hard by; and drawing somewhat near, I perceived two or three gentlemen, or persons that looked like such, who would needs fall foul on a waterman because he would not follow our boat. I leaped at a venture into that boat, just as it was launching forth, the waterman fearing he should be roughly handled. But if I was troubled that my company had left me at Saint Clou, I was no less perplexed to find that he who had offered this violence, was the same Saldagne, whom I had so much reason to hate. At the instant I discovered him, he removed from the place he sat in, and seated himself by me. I did not know which way to look, and hid my face from him in the best manner I could. But finding him so near, that it was impossible to conceal myself long, and knowing I had no sword, I took the most desperate resolution that could be, and which even hatred could not have suggested, had it not been attended with jealousy; I seized him

him by the middle, and threw myself into the river with him. Whether his gloves, or his sudden surprize, hindered him, I cannot tell, but he was not able to keep hold of my cloaths, and never was man nearer drowning. A great many of the neighbouring boats came to save us, but every one thinking we had fallen into the water accidentally, except Saldagne, who knew the truth, without being in a condition to discover or to pursue me, I got on shore again without much difficulty, having only a thin suit on, which did not much hinder my swimming; and thinking it worth my labour to make haste, I got far enough off from Saint Clou before Saldagne was fished up.

As they had not a little ado to save him, so, I dare say, they could hardly believe his relation that I threw him into the water, and ventured my own drowning to procure his. I was forced to go a great way about to get into Paris, and durst not enter the city till night; having no need to dry my cloaths, the heat of the sun and my violent exercise having left but little moisture in them.

At length I got to my dear Leonora, whom I found in great affliction. Rancour and our landlady were over-joyed to see me

me again, and so likewise was madame la Boissiere, who, the better to make her think I was her son, acted the part of a distressed mother : she excused herself in private to me for their not staying ; assuring me the fright Saldagne had put them into, hindered them from thinking on me ; besides, that, except Rancour, the rest of our company would have rather embarrassed than helped me, if I had engaged Saldagne. They told me, that, at their going from the tavern, this spark followed them to the water-side, where he very uncivilly pressed Leonora to unmask ; but her mother discovering him to be the same man that had attempted the like at Rome, shuffled into the boat in a fright, and made the waterman put off from the shore, without staying for me. Saldagne, in the mean time, being accompanied by a couple of rakes, like himself, got into the next boat with his two comrades, where I found him threatening the waterman to make him follow Leonora.

This adventure made me keep more within doors than I had formerly done ; and madame la Boissiere's melancholly contributing much to her malady, we were obliged to remain a great part of the winter at Paris : but being at last informed,

ed, that an Italian prelate, who came from Spain, was going to Flanders through Peronne, Rancour made interest to comprehend us in the passport in the quality of comedians.

One day, after we had waited upon this Italian prelate, who lodged in the Rue de Sein, we supped, in a frolick, in the suburbs of Saint Germain, with some players of Rancour's acquaintance; and going over the Pont-Neuf afterwards very late, were set upon by five or six rogues. I made the best defence I could; and, to give Rancour his due, he did as much as any brave man could have done; inso-much, that he saved my life, though he could not keep me from being seized by these robbers, because my sword had most unhappily fallen from my hands. Rancour, however, got out of their clutches, with the loss only of his cloak, but I was plundered of all I had, except my doublet and breeches; and, to aggravate my misfortunes, they rifled me of an enamelled box with Leonora's father's picture in it, which madame la Boissiere had left with me, to try what I could get for some diamonds it had round the case. I found Rancour at the bridge-foot, wounded in the arm and face, as I myself

self was, though slightly, in the head. Madame la Boissiere was very much concerned for the loss of the picture; but the hopes of seeing the original shortly, comforted her. In fine, we went from Paris to Peronne; from Peronne to Brussels; and from Brussels to the Hague; from whence Leonora's father had been gone about a fortnight before for England, where he intended to serve the king against Cromwell. Leonora's mother was now so deeply afflicted at his departure, that she fell suddenly sick and died. As she was breathing her last, and seeing me grieve as much as if I had been her own son, she recommended her daughter to me, and made me engage that I would not forsake her, but endeavour to find out her father, and restore her to his possession. Not long after, a Frenchman robbed me of all the rest of my money, which reduced both Leonora and myself to such necessity, that we were forced to get into your company, who, you know, accepted of us through the recommendation of Rancour. You are acquainted with the rest of my adventures, which since that time have been common to us all, at least as far as Tours, where I think I saw that devil Saldagne again: and, if not very
much

much mistaken, believe it will not be long before I meet him somewhere here, which I fear less for my own part than for Leonora's, who would lose a most faithful servant, if I should happen to miscarry, or be forced by my unlucky stars to part from her.

Thus Destiny ended his story; and, after having comforted Stella, whom the relation had a little disordered, by renewing the remembrance of her misfortunes, at which she wept as much as if then they had just happened, he took his leave of the actresses and went to bed.

C H A P. XIX.

Some reflections which are not amiss, Ragotin's new disgrace, and other things, which you may read if you please.

LOVE, which makes the young undertake any thing, and the old forget every thing; love, which occasioned the wars of Troy, and many others besides, that I do not think worth while to mention here, would needs make it known in the city of Mans, that he is as much to be dreaded in a pitiful inn, as in

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the richest palace whatsoever. He was not therefore contented with depriving the amorous Ragotin of his appetite, but likewise inspired la Rappiniere with a thousand irregular desires; and made Roquebrune languish for the operator's wife, by adding a fourth folly to his vanity, bravery and poetry; or rather obliging him to commit a double infidelity; for he had made his amorous addresses a long while before, both to Stella and Angelica, who often advised him to desist, and not throw away his courtship. But all this is nothing to what I shall now relate: love triumphed likewise over the insensibility and misanthropy of Rancour, who became enamoured of the operator's wife too, and consequently a rival to the poet Roquebrune. A punishment for his sins, and an atonement for the cursed writings he had published. This woman's name was Donna Inizella del Prado, a native of Malaga; and her husband, or he that was reputed such, signior Ferdinando Ferdinandi, a gentleman of Venice, born at Caen in Normandy. There were several others in the inn besides those already mentioned, who were infected with the same disease, as dangerously, if not more so, than those whose secrets I have

have revealed; but they shall be discovered too in due time and place. La Rappiniere fell in love with Stella when she acted Climene; and intended then to have declared his distemper to Rancour, whom he thought capable of doing any thing for money. The heavenly bard Roquebrune designed the conquest of a Spanish lady worthy his courage. But as for Rancour, I cannot imagine by what potent charms this foreign lady could inflame the heart of one with love, who hated all the world.

This worn-out stroller, being in hell before his time, I mean in love before his death, was still in bed, when Ragotin troubled him with his passion, as it were the belly-ach, and came to desire of him his pity and assistance. Rancour assured him, ere that day was over, he would do him a notable piece of service with his mistress. La Rappiniere entered Rancour's chamber at the same time, who was still dressing himself. Having taken him aside, he confessed his infirmity to him, and vowed, that if he could bring him into favour with Stella, there was nothing in his power, but he would do for him, even to the making him one of the assistants, and bestowing his niece in marriage on

him, whom he designed to make his sole heiress after his death, because he had no children of his own. The cheating rogue promised him yet more than he had done Ragotin, which put this hangman's purveyor in good hopes. Roquebrune came likewise to consult the same oracle. He was the most incorrigible presumptuous coxcomb, that ever came from the banks of the Garonne, and one who thought every body believed what he romanced about his family, riches, poetry and valour; so that he slighted all the dry jests which Rancour perpetually cast at him, presuming that what he did was only for conversation sake: and, beside, he understood raillery as well as any man alive, and bore it like a christian philosopher, even when it touched him to the very quick. He therefore imagined he was admired by all the players, nay, even by Rancour himself, who had experience enough to admire but few things; and was so far from having a good opinion of this poor brother of the quill, that he made a full enquiry into his extraction, thereby to discover whether those bishops and lords, his countrymen, whom he continually quoted as his relations, were the true branches of the genealogic tree, which
th

this fool had caused to be drawn in an old roll of parchment. He was very sorry to find Rancour in company, though he had less need to be troubled at that time than any one besides, it being his custom, to be ever whispering in people's ears, and to make a secret of every thing, sometimes of nothing. However he took Rancour into a corner, and at first gravely desired to know whether the operator's wife was a person of good sense or no; because he had loved women of all nations but Spaniards; and if she was worth his labour, he should not be much the poorer, if he presented her with a hundred pistoles, which he as often mentioned upon every trifling occasion, as the great family from whence he descended. Rancour told him, he was not so well acquainted with Donna Inizella, as to answer for her sense, though he had often met her husband in the chiefest cities of the kingdom, where he sold his antidotes; but if he desired so much to be informed about it, it was but joining conversation with her, since she began to speak French tolerably well, and he might soon be satisfied. Roquebrune would needs entrust him with his pedigree in parchment, that he might dazzle the Spanish lady.

with the splendor of his race ; but Rancour told him his pedigree would sooner make him a knight of Malta, than a happy lover. Whereupon Roquebrune with a smiling countenance added, well, Sir, you know what I am. Yes, replied Rancour, I know well enough what you are now, and what you will ever be to your dying day. The poet went away as he came ; and Rancour, his rival and confident at the same time, drew near to la Rappiniere and Ragotin, who were rivals also, though unknown to each other. As for Rancour, besides that we naturally hate any one that endeavours to rob us of what we design for ourselves, and the general quarrel he had against all mankind ; besides all this, I say, he ever had a particular aversion to poets, which this discovery was not likely to abate. Rancour therefore absolutely resolved, from that time forward, to do him all the mischief he possibly could ; to which also his malign nature prompted him, and fitted him for it : and, not to lose time, he began that very day, by basely borrowing money of him, wherewith he new cloathed himself from top to toe, and besides stocked himself with linen. He had before been a sloven all his life-time ; but
love,

love, which works far greater miracles than any thing else, now made him more curious of his dress in his declining days. In a word, he changed his linen oftener than became a stroller; and began to wash, powder, and colour his grey hairs, and trim himself so carefully, that his companions took notice of it. The players had that day a play bespoke, at an house of one of the chiefest citizens of Mans, who had made a great treat, and gave a ball at his niece's wedding, whose guardian he had been. The nuptials were kept at a very fair country-house of his, about a league from the city. The decorator belonging to the strollers, and a carpenter, were sent in the morning early to erect a stage. The whole company of players followed in two coaches, about eleven o'clock, that they might get thither by dinner-time. Donna Inezilla, the Spanish lady, made one, at the earnest intreaty of the actresses and Rancour. Ragotin being informed of the business, went to an inn at the end of the suburbs, where he waited the coming of the coaches, and tyed a very fine horse which he had borrowed, to the grate of the parlour, that looked into the street. He was scarce set down to dinner, when word was brought him, that the coach

was in sight. He flew to his horse on the wings of love, with a great sword by his side, and a carabine dangling at his breech like a bandileer. He would never confess what his fancy was, to go to the wedding with such store of offensive and defensive weapons; neither could Rancour his confident ever persuade him to discover it. By that time he had untied his horse's bridle, the coaches were so near, that he had not time to look for a jossing-block, that he might appear in state on his steed like St. George on horseback. And being none of the best horsemen and unprepared to shew his nimble disposition, he did it but very awkwardly; for his horse's legs were as much too long, as his were too short. However, he stoutly reared himself in the stirrup, and threw his right leg over the saddle; but the girths being loose, this occasioned a strange disaster; for it made the saddle to turn round. Yet all things went hitherto well enough, but the cursed carabine, which hung on a belt about his neck like a collar, got so unfortunately betwixt his legs before he was sensible of it, that his breech could not reach the saddle, which was an old-fashioned one, the carabine lying across from the pommel to the crupper. Thus he sat in a very
uneasy

uneasy posture, as not being able with the tip of his toe so much as to touch the stirrups: his heels, however, being armed with spurs, he kicked the horse's side in a place he was never used to be pricked in, which made him start more briskly than was necessary for a bad rider in that posture, who had nothing but the carabine to rest upon. This made Ragotin cling his legs still more close to the horse's sides, which made him sling up his hinder legs; when Ragotin following the nature of all heavy bodies, fell on the horse's neck, who, lifting up his head suddenly at a jerk he gave him with the bridle, hit the unfortunate Ragotin a great blow on the nose; who, thinking to repair his oversight, let go the reins. The horse having his head given him, he at that very instant gave such a great leap, as cast his rider quite over the saddle upon the crupper, with the carabine still between his legs. The horse not being used to carry any thing behind, kicked up again, which places Ragotin in the saddle as before. The unskilful horseman now clapped his heels close to the sides afresh, and then the horse flung up his hinder legs more than at first; which pitched the unfortunate Ragotin just
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upon

upon the pummel; where we must leave him as on a pinnacle, to rest ourselves a while; for, upon the honour of a gentleman, this description has cost me more pains, than the whole book besides, and yet I am not quite satisfied with it neither.

C H A P. XX.

The shortest in this present book. Ragotin's fall, and something of the like nature which happened to Roquebrune.

WE left Ragotin planted on the pummel of a saddle, not knowing how to behave himself, and much perplexed how he should get off. I scarce believe Phaeton, of unhappy memory, was ever more troubled with his father's four fiery steeds, than was at this time our little lawyer with one, on which he nevertheless sat as quiet as a lamb. That it did not cost him his life, as it did Phaeton, was owing to fortune, whose caprices would be a fit subject to expatiate on, were I not in consequence obliged to release Ragotin from the imminent danger he is in; having besides, many more things to treat of concerning our strollers, during their residence.

residence at Mans. As soon as the dis-
afterous Ragotin felt what an uneasy
cushion he had under the two most fleshy
parts of his body, on which he used to
sit as all other rational creatures are
wont ; I mean, as soon as he found him-
self perched on the carabine, he quitted
the bridle like a man of discretion, and
laid hold of the horse's mane, who at the
same time run away full speed. There-
upon the carabine went off : Ragotin
thought he had been shot, his horse un-
doubtedly believed the same, and there-
fore made such a stumble, that the little
man lost his seat ; so that for a time, he
hung by the horse's mane, with one foot
entangled by his spur in the saddle-cloth ;
and the other, with the rest of his body,
hanging dangling towards the earth in
expectation of a fall, as soon as his spur
should break loose ; together with his
sword, carabine, and bandaleer. At length
his foot being disengaged, his hands let
go the mane, and down he tumbled,
though with more grace and skill than he
got up. All this happened in the sight
of the coaches, that stopped on purpose
to see what would become of him ; or
rather to have the pleasure of laughing at
him. He cursed the horse, who stood

stock still, as soon as he had laid down his load ; but to comfort him, they took him into one of the coaches in the poet's room, who was willing to ride, that he might flutter about the coach, and court Inezilla, who sat in the boot. Ragotin resigned his sword and fire-arms to him, which he put on as dexterously as any son of Mars could have done. He lengthened his stirrups, fitted the bridle, and without doubt went up more methodically than Ragotin had done. But surely there had some spell been cast upon this unlucky horse that day ; for the saddle being too loosely girted, as before, turned round with the poet, as it had done with Ragotin ; and the string of his breeches breaking, the horse ran a pretty way with him, whilst he had but one foot in the stirrup, his other serving the beast as a fifth leg, whereby his back parts became exposed to all the company, his breeches dangling all the way about his heels. None of the spectators laughed much at Ragotin's mishap, because they were afraid he would hurt himself ; but Roquebrune's accident was attended with loud shouts and laughter from the coaches : the coachmen stopped to laugh their fill, and all together hallooed at Roquebrune, which

which drove him, having disengaged himself, into a house for shelter, leaving the horse to his own discretion, who very wisely trotted back again to the town. Ragotin knowing he was responsible for the beast, alighted out of the coach and went after him; when the poet, having cased up his posteriors, returned to the coach much troubled, and no less troublesome to the company by Ragotin's martial equipage, who had undergone this their disgrace in his mistress's presence, with which we shall conclude the twentieth chapter.

C H A P. XXI.

Which perhaps will not be found very entertaining.

THE players were very well received by the master of the house, who was a good honest man, and one of the most considerable in those parts. They had two chambers allotted them to lay their cloaths in, and make themselves ready for the play, which was put off till after supper. They dined in private, and, after dinner, those that had a mind to walk,

walk, had the choice of a grove and a fine garden to do it in. A young counsellor of the parliament of Reenes, and near kinsman to the master of the house, accosted our players, having discovered Destiny to be a person of more than vulgar judgment, and the actresses, besides their great beauty, to be such as could say more than just the parts they had learned by heart. They discoursed of matters relating to their profession, as plays, and dramatic writers. This young counsellor said, amongst other things, that there was scarce any remarkable subject for the stage, that had not been blown upon; that all history was almost exhausted, and that modern authors would at last be constrained to wave those nice rules of unity of time, and stretch it beyond four and twenty hours: that the generality of people did not apprehend what those severe rules of the stage were good for, being rather pleased with action and representation than recitals; and therefore such plots might be contrived as would meet with applause, without either falling into the extravagancies of the Spaniards, or being tyed up to the strict precepts of Aristotle. From plays, they proceeded to talk of romances. The
counsellor

counsellor said, that nothing could be more diverting, than our modern romances; that the French alone knew how to write good ones; however, that the Spaniards had a peculiar talent to compose little stories, which they called novelas, which are more useful, and more probable patterns for us to follow, than those imaginary heroes of antiquity, who grow oftentimes tedious and troublesome, by being over-civil, and over-virtuous; in short, that those examples which may be imitated, are at least as beneficial, as those that exceed all probability and belief. From all which he concluded, that if a man could write as good novels in French, as those of Miguel de Cervantes, they would soon be as much in vogue as ever heroic romances have been. Roquebrune was not of the same opinion: he affirmed very positively, that there could be no pleasure in reading romances, unless they contained the adventures of princes; nay, and of great princes too; and, for that reason, Astrea only pleased him in some places. In what histories can one find kings and emperors enough to make new romances? said the counsellor. We must feign them, replied Roquebrune, as is usually done in fabulous stories,

stories, which have no foundation in history. I perceive then, returned the counsellor, that Don Quixote is very little in your favour. It is the silliest book that ever I read, replied Roquebrune, though it be cried up by a great many men of wit. Have a care, said Destiny, it be not rather for want of wit in you, than any defect in the book, that you entertain so indifferent an opinion of it. Roquebrune would not have failed to answer Destiny, had he but heard what he had spoke: but he was so taken up with telling his feats to some ladies, who were come near the players, that he minded him not; but promised the fair ladies, he would write a romance in five parts; every part to contain five volumes, which should eclipse all the Cassandra's, Cleopatra's, and Cyrus's in the world, though this last had the surname of Great, as well as the son of Pepin. During this, the counsellor was telling Destiny and the actresses, that he had writ some novels in imitation of the Spaniards, and promised he would communicate them. Thereupon, Inezilla told them, in a sort of French that had more of the Gascon than the Spanish in it, that her first husband had the character of a tolerable writer in:
the

the court of Spain, having composed several novels that were much esteemed, some whereof she had in manuscript, which, in her opinion, deserved to be translated into French. The young counsellor being extremely curious in such kind of compositions, told the Spanish lady, she would do him a great favour in letting him have the perusal of them, which she very civilly consented to do; adding withal, that no body was better stored with novels than herself; for as some women in her country would sometimes attempt to write both in verse and prose, so she had made it her entertainment, and could amuse them with some novels of her own making. Roquebrune confidently, according to custom, offered to turn them into French. Inezilla, who was perhaps the sharpest Spaniard that had ever come over the Pyrenees, replied, that to do as he pretended, it was not only requisite he should understand the French tongue well, but be equally acquainted with the Spanish also; and that therefore she could not give him her novels to translate, till she was so well acquainted with the French, as to be able to judge whether he was qualified for the undertaking. Rancour, who had been
silent

silent all the while, said, there was no doubt to be made of his ability, since he had been corrector to a printing-house. He had no sooner popp'd out these words, but he remembered Roquebrune had lent him money, which made him pursue his jest no further: to which the poet, put out of countenance at Rancour's words, replied, that he could not deny but that he had corrected some few sheets, but then they were nothing but what he had published of his own. Stella, to shift the discourse, told Donna Inezilla, that as she was mistress of so many agreeable stories, she could not be angry if she often importuned her to relate one of them. The Spanish lady replied, she was ready to give her satisfaction. They took her at her word, and all the company having seated themselves round her, she began a story, though not in the very same words that you will find in the following chapter, yet so intelligibly, as made them guess she was mistress of a great deal of wit in Spanish, since she discovered so much in a language, to the delicacies of which she was a perfect stranger.

C H A P. XXII.

The Impostor out-witted: A Novel.

A Young lady of the city of Toledo, named Victoria, descended from the ancient family of Portocarrero, had retired to a house she had on the banks of the Tagus, about half a league distant from that city, in the absence of her brother, who was captain of a troop of horse in the Low Countries. She became a widow at seventeen, having been married to an old gentleman that had got a great estate in the Indies, who, about six months after his marriage, perished in a storm at sea, leaving much wealth to his wife. This fair widow, after the death of her husband, kept house constantly with her brother, where she lived in such repute, that, at the age of twenty, all the mothers proposed her as a pattern to their children, the husbands to their wives, and lovers as a conquest worthy ambition. But as her retirement had cooled the love of many, so, on the other hand, it encreased the esteem the world had for her. In her country-house she enjoyed, at liberty, all the innocent pleasures of rural life; when,

one morning, her shepherds brought her two men, whom they had found stripped of all their cloaths; and bound fast to a tree, to which they had been tyed the whole night. They had lent each of them a scurvy shepherd's coat to cover their nakedness; and in this fine equipage they appeared before the fair Victoria. So mean a habit did not hide from her the noble mein of the younger, who made her an elegant compliment, and told her he was a gentleman of Cordoua, Don Lopes de Gongora by name, who, travelling from Sevil to Madrid about business of great importance, and having overstayed his time about half a day's journey from Toledo, where he had dined the day before, the night surprized them; and both he and his man falling asleep, expecting a mule-driver who stayed behind, some thieves finding them in that condition, tyed them to a tree, after having stripped them. Victoria doubted not the truth of this relation, his good mein pleading in his favour; however, she thought it would be a mark of generosity in her to relieve a stranger reduced to this sad extremity. It happened by good luck, that, amongst the cloaths her brother had left in her custody, there were some suits,
for

for the Spaniards never part with their old cloaths, though they make new ones. They chose the finest, and that which fitted best the master's shape; and his man was also cloathed with what they could find next at hand. Dinner-time being come, this stranger, whom Victoria had invited to her table, appeared so accomplished, and entertained her with so much wit, that she thought the relief she had afforded him, could never have been better bestowed. They conversed together the remaining part of the day, and were so much taken with each other's perfections, that neither of them slept so quietly that night as they had done before. The stranger would needs send his man to Madrid, to fetch him money, and buy him some cloaths, or at least he pretended to do so; but the fair widow would by no means suffer him, promising to lend him as much as would carry him to his journey's end. He made some overtures of love to her the very same day, and she gave him a favourable audience. In fine, in a fortnight's time, the opportunity of the place, the equal merit of these two persons, a great many oaths and vows on one side, too much frankness and credulity on the other, a promise of marriage

marriage tendered, and reciprocal faith plighted in the presence of an old gentleman-usher, and waiting-woman, made her commit a fault she had hitherto been thought incapable of, and put this happy stranger in possession of the most beautiful lady of Toledo. For eight days together it was nothing but love, fire and flames, between these two lovers. But now they must part and tears will succeed: Victoria indeed had a right to stay him, but the stranger pretended he lost a great deal by not going; however professed, that since he had been so happy as to win her heart, he would mind no more, either his lawsuit at Madrid, or his preferment at court. Hereupon she grew impatient to have him gone; her passion it seems not having blinded her reason so much, as to make her prefer the pleasure of his company, to that of his advancement. She got new cloaths made for him and his man at Toledo, furnished him with as much money as he desired; and so he set forward on his journey to Madrid, mounted on a good mule, and his man on another. The poor lady was full of real grief at his departure, and he was no less afflicted, or at least pretended to be so, with the greatest hypocrisy in the world. The

same day he took his journey, the chamber-maid making his bed, found a picture wrapped in a letter; she carried them immediately to her mistress, who found it to be the portrait of a most beautiful young lady; and read the letter, contained these words, or others to the same effect.

“ *Dear Cousin,*

“ H E R E inclosed I send you the picture of the beautiful Elvira de Sylva; but when you shall see her, you will be apt to confess how infinitely the resemblance falls short of the original; and how much brighter her beauty is than that the painter could draw for her. Her father Don Pedro de Sylva expects you with impatience: the articles of marriage between you and her are already drawn up according to your wishes, and, in my opinion, very much to your advantage. All this, I hope, will be sufficient to hasten your journey. Farewell.

“ *Madrid, &c.*

“ *Don Antonio de Ribera.*”

This letter was directed to Ferdinand de Ribera at Sevil. You may imagine Victoria's astonishment at the reading of
this

this epistle, which, in all probability, could be written to no other than her false Lopez de Gongora. She now perceived, but too late, that this stranger, whom she had so highly and so hastily obliged, had disguised his name; and thereby was fully assured of his infidelity. The beauty of the lady in the picture made her feel all the torments of jealousy; and the articles of marriage already drawn up, almost distracted her with despair. Never was any poor creature more sensibly afflicted; her sighs and tears were faithful interpreters of her sorrow: miserable, abandoned woman that I am, said she to herself, have I thus long been so discreet and reserved, to commit, at last, a most irreparable fault! And have I refused so many men of quality of my acquaintance, who would have thought themselves but too happy in my condescension, to throw myself away upon a stranger, who, perhaps, laughs at my easy credulity, now he has ruined my fame, and made me for ever miserable! What will they say of me at Toledo! Nay, what will they say throughout Spain! Can a young, base, cheating pretender be discreet? Why did I let him know I loved him, before I was sure of the
sincerity

Sincerity of his heart? Would he have changed his name, if he had meant to keep his flattering promises? Or can I hope, after all this, that he will not reveal his easy conquest over me? What will not my brother be provoked to do to me, for what I have done against myself? And to what purpose is he now courting glory and fame in Flanders, if I meanly disgrace him thus in Spain? No, no, Victoria, thou must do any thing to repair this crime: but before I proceed to vengeance, and desperate remedies, I must try to regain by craft, what I have lost by imprudence: it will then be time enough to have recourse to desperate methods, when all other means prove ineffectual. Victoria had, it seems, a great spirit, and presence of mind, since she could fix on so good a resolution at such a difficulty. Her old gentleman-usher, and her waiting-woman, would have both given her advice; but she told them, she knew as much as they could say; and that actions, not words, must now do her business. The very same day, a couple of carts were laden with household-stuff and necessities, Victoria giving out, amongst her domestics, that she had pressing business concerning her brother; which called her

to court. She took coach with her squire and woman, and hastened to Madrid, whither her goods were appointed to follow. As soon as Victoria arrived there, she enquired for Don Pedro de Sylva's house; and being informed whereabouts it was, hired one for herself in the same street. Her gentleman-usher's name was Roderigo Santillane, who, having been bred up from a child by Victoria's father, created in him a love for his mistress, equal to that of a brother. Having much acquaintance in Madrid, where he spent his youthful days, he soon discovered, that Don Pedro de Sylva's daughter was to be wedded to a gentleman of Sevil, named Ferdinand de Ribera; that the match had been negociated by a cousin of Ribera's of the same name, and was so near a conclusion, that Don Pedro was already providing servants for his daughter.

The very next day, Roderigo Santillane, in a plain, but decent garb, Victoria in the habit of a widow of mean condition, accompanied by Beatrix the waiting-woman, who was to personate her mother-in-law, and Roderigo's wife, went altogether to Don Pedro's, and desired to speak with him. Don Pedro received them very civilly, and Roderigo acquainted
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ed him, with much assurance, that he was a decayed gentleman of the mountains of Toledo, who having an only daughter by his first wife, which was Victoria, whose husband died not long since at Sevil, and finding his own, and his daughter's fortune very low, he had brought her to court in hopes of obtaining some good service for her; but, having been informed that Don Pedro was about settling his daughter's family against her marriage, he hoped it would not appear impertinent that he came to proffer the young widow's service to him, as a person well qualified for a duenna to the bride; adding, his daughter's merit gave him the greater confidence to present her to him, because he assured himself that her breeding and good qualities would procure her a little better title to her mistress's favour, than the small stock of beauty she had to recommend her.

Before I proceed any further, I must advertise those that are unacquainted with it, that the ladies in Spain keep duennas in their houses, and that those duennas are much the same with our governesses, or ladies of honour, belonging to persons of quality: to which I must add that the duennas in Spain are severe and trouble-

some animals, no less dreadful than a domineering mother-in-law is esteemed among us.

But to go on with my story, Roderigo played his part so well, and Victoria appeared so beautiful and agreeable in her modest and plain attire, and had such a promising look in her face, that Don Pedro de Sylva accepted of her immediately to govern his daughter. He proffered Roderigo and his wife an employment in his house likewise; but he excused himself, and told him, he had some reasons for not accepting the honour he intended him; but having a house in the same street, he would be ready to wait on him at any time he should command it. Thus was Victoria entertained in Don Pedro's house, infinitely beloved both by him and his daughter, and consequently envied by their servants.

Don Antonio de Ribera, who had contrived the match between his faithless cousin and Don Pedro Sylva's daughter, came often to visit them. He said his kinsman was on his journey; and had long since informed him of his setting off from Sevil; but this cousin not yet appearing he was very much perplexed, nor could Don Pedro and Elvira tell what to make
of

of his delay. Victoria, it may be imagined, was the most concerned. Don Ferdinand, however, was incapable of arriving so soon as she expected him; for the very same day he parted from Victoria, Heaven had, in some measure, punished his treachery. As he was passing through Illescas, a fierce dog, running unawares out of a house, so terribly frightened the mule he rode on, that one of his legs was sorely bruised against a wall, he thrown from the creature's back, and his knee put out of joint; which pained him so exceedingly, that he could not prosecute his journey. He was seven or eight days under the surgeon's hands; who being none of the most skilful, and his ailment growing worse and worse, he at length acquainted his cousin with his misfortune, desiring him withal, to send him a horse-litter. The news of his friend's fall afflicted no less, than the knowledge of his being so nigh pleased them; and Victoria, who still loved him, was not a little disquieted.

Don Antonio sent a litter to convey Don Ferdinand to Madrid; where being arrived, whilst they were providing cloaths for him and his retinue, which was to be very magnificent, he being the eldest son

of the family, and wealthy enough, the surgeons of Madrid, more skilful than those at Illescas, made him a perfect cure.

Don Pedro de Sylva, and his daughter Elvira, had notice of the day when Don Antonio de Ribera was to bring his cousin Don Ferdinand to them. It is not probable that the young Elvira neglected herself upon that occasion; or that Victoria was without concern at this intended interview. She saw her faithless lover enter, tricked up like a bridegroom; and if he was so charming in a poor naked dishabille, what must he be now in his wedding cloaths? Don Pedro was very well satisfied with him, and his daughter must have been very nice, had she not been fully pleased. The servants of the house stared with all the eyes they had upon their young lady's bridegroom; and every one of the family was over-joyed at the match, except the poor Victoria, whose heart you may imagine was oppressed with grief. Don Ferdinand was charmed with Elvira's beauty, and confessed to his cousin, that she was yet more beautiful than the picture he had given of her with his letter. His first compliments displayed a great deal of wit, and he
very

very skilfully avoided those impertinent fooleries, and starched nonsense, which most men are guilty of, in their first addresses to a father-in-law and a mistress : after which, Don Pedro de Sylva locked himself up in a closet with the two kinsmen and a lawyer, to adjust somewhat that was left unfinished in the articles.

In the mean time, Elvira stayed in her chamber, surrounded by her women, who all expressed their joy at the good mien and noble air of her lover, except Victoria, who stood cool and silent, whilst the rest were in their raptures. Elvira observed this, and therefore took her aside, to tell her, that she admired she said nothing of the happy choice her father had made of a son-in-law, who seemed so deserving ; adding, that, either out of complaisance or civility, she ought, at least, to wish her joy. Madam, replied Victoria, your lover's mien speaks so much to his advantage, that it were needless for me to add my commendations ; the coldness you have taken notice of, does not proceed from any indifference ; and I were unworthy of the favours you have vouchsafed me, should I not share in every thing that concerns you ; and therefore, should be no less transported with joy at

your marriage, than all the rest about you are, was I not so well acquainted with the gentleman you are about to wed. My own husband was an inhabitant of Sevil, whose house was not far from your lover's. He is, I confess, of a good family, rich, handsome, and, I believe, a man of wit. In fine, he is worthy a lady, such as you are: but I must tell you, madam, if you desire a man's entire affection, that he cannot bestow on you, because his heart is divided. I would wave a discovery, which may, perhaps, displease you; but I should be wanting to my duty, if I did not reveal all I know of Don Ferdinand, in a business which so nearly concerns the happiness or unhappiness of your whole life. Elvira was amazed at her duenna's words, and intreated her, not to defer any longer the clearing those doubts she had started; but being answered that it was neither to be done before her women, nor in few words, she pretended to have some business of privacy in her chamber, and ordered her servants to withdraw.

As soon as they were alone, Victoria told her, that Ferdinand de Ribera was in love at Sevil, with one Lucretia de Monsalva, a very beautiful lady, though of
very

very mean fortune, by whom he had three children, upon promise of marriage; and that during Ribera's father's life, it was kept secret; but after his death, Lucretia having claimed his promise, he grew indifferent to her; whereupon she had left the business to the management of two gentlewomen, her relations, who had made so much noise at Sevil, that Don Ferdinand, through his friend's persuasion, absented himself for a while, to shun the rage of Lucretia's relations, who sought for nothing so much as blood and revenge. In this posture were his affairs, added she, when I left Sevil, which is about a month ago; at which time it was also reported, that Don Ferdinand was going to Madrid to be married. Elvira could not forbear asking, whether that Lucretia was a great beauty? Victoria told her, she wanted nothing but a fortune; and then left her extremely pensive, and firmly resolved to give her father an immediate account of the discovery.

Being now called to entertain her lover, as the business for which he had retired into the closet with her father, was concluded, Elvira went to him, whilst Victoria stayed in the drawing-room; where the same fellow came to her that attended

on him, when she so generously received them into her house near Toledo. The servant brought a packet of letters for his master, which he had taken up at the post-office from Sevil; and not knowing Victoria, so much her widow's weeds disguised her, he desired to be admitted to the speech of his master, to deliver him his letters. She told him, it would be a good while before he could conveniently speak with him; but if he durst trust her with his packet, she would be sure to give it him as soon as possibly she could. The fellow made no scruple in the matter, but having left the packet in her custody, went about his business.

Victoria, who was resolved to leave no stone unturned to revenge herself, goes up to her own chamber, opens the packet, and in a moment seals it up again, together with a letter of her own, which she writ in haste. In the mean time, the two kinsmen having made an end of their visit, and taken their leave, Elvira, seeing the packet in her governante's hands, asked what it was? Victoria coldly answered, that Don Ferdinand's servant had left a packet of some letters with her to deliver to his master, which she was going to send after him, not being in
the

the way when he went out. Elvira said, it would give them some farther light about the discovery she had made, and therefore she would open them. This being what was desired, Victoria breaks open the seal a second time : Elvira looked upon all the letters, and fixing her eye upon one which seemed to be writ by a woman, addressed to Don Ferdinand de Ribera at Madrid, she read the following lines.

“YOUR absence, and the news I heard of your marriage at court, will soon deprive you of a person that valued you above her own life, unless you suddenly return, and make good your promise ; which you can neither defer any longer, nor deny me without a manifest indifference, or breach of faith. If what I hear be true, that you regard your vows and promises so little, which you have made both to me and our children, I advise you to take care of your life ; which my relations are resolved to take for your treachery, whenever your ungrateful usage shall prompt me to call upon them for my just revenge, since you enjoy it now only at my request.

“ *Sevil, &c.*

“ *Lucretia de Monsalva.*”

Elvira having read this letter, was thoroughly persuaded of the truth of what her governante had told her, and shewed it to her father, who was astonished to see that a gentleman of his quality could be so base, as to forsake a lady of equal birth with himself, after he had had so many children by her. He therefore went immediately to a gentleman of Sevil for a farther information, who was a friend of his, and one that had before given him an account of Ferdinand's wealth and circumstances.

Scarce was he gone from his door, when Don Ferdinand came to enquire for his packet, attended by his servant, who told him that his mistress's governante had promised to deliver it into his hands. He found Elvira alone in the parlour, and told her, that, though the engagement which was between her and him, might excuse two visits in one day, yet he now only came for the letters his man told him he had left with her duenna. Elvira freely acknowledged that she had taken them from her, and, urged by curiosity, not doubting but a man of his years had some amorous engagements in so great a city as Sevil, she opened it; and, though her curiosity afforded her but little satisfaction,

faction, yet had she met with this caution in recompence, That it was dangerous for people to be married together, before they were thoroughly acquainted; adding, she would not debar him any longer of the pleasure of perusing his letters; and therefore immediately restored him his packet, together with the counterfeit letter; and, after making him a slight curtesy, left him without waiting for his answer.

Don Ferdinand was strangely surprised at his mistress's discourse. He perused the supposed letter, and quickly perceived it was a trick to hinder his marriage. He addressed himself to Victoria, who remained in the outward room, and told her, without taking much notice of her face, that either some rival, or malicious person, had contrived that letter to abuse him. I a wife in Sevil! cried he with amazement: I children! If this be not the most impudent imposture that ever was set on foot, I'll forfeit my head. Victoria told him he might possibly be innocent: however, Elvira, in common discretion, could do no less than make a farther enquiry into the truth; and that therefore the marriage would certainly be put off, till her father Don Pedro could
be

be convinced by a gentleman of Sevil, a friend of his (whom he was then gone to seek on purpose) that this was only a pretended intrigue. With all my heart, answered he; and if there be but a lady of the name of Lucretia de Monsalva in all Sevil, let me forfeit the honour and reputation of a gentleman. I must, however, intreat you, added he, to let me know, if you are so far in your lady's favour, as I suppose you to be, that I may bespeak your good offices on this occasion. Truly, answered Victoria, I believe, without vanity, that she will not do any thing at the persuasion of another, which she hath refused to do at mine: but, however, I know her humour to be such, that she is not easily appeased, when she thinks herself disobliged: and, as all the hopes of mending my fortune depends on the kindness she has for me, I shall never offer to contradict her out of complaisance to you; or hazard her displeasure by endeavouring to dissuade her from the ill opinion she entertains of your sincerity. I am but poor, added she; and, not to get any thing, were to lose a great deal: if what she has promised to give me in case I marry a second time, should fail, I might live a widow all the rest of my days; though

though I am yet young enough, and not so deformed, but that some body or other may like me. But 'tis an old saying, and a true one, That without money——She was thus going on with a true governante's tedious tale (for to act her part to the life, she must talk a great deal) when Don Ferdinand interrupting her, said, Do me but one piece of service I shall require of you, and I will put you above the hopes of your mistress's reward: and, added he, to convince you that my promises are not empty words, give me but pen, ink, and paper, and you shall immediately have what you will under my hand. Jesu! Signior, said the feigned governante, a gentleman's word is as good as his bond—but, to obey you, I will fetch you what you desire; and returning again with materials enough to have drawn a bond for a million of gold, Don Ferdinand was so gallant, or at least had such a month's mind to Elvira, that he signed her a blank, leaving her to fill it up as she pleased, thereby to engage her to serve him with the greater zeal. This raised Victoria up to the clouds: she promised wonders to Don Ferdinand, and moreover told him, she wished herself the unhappiest of all her sex, if she did not
act

act in this business, as if she herself had been a party concerned ; in which word she spoke a great truth.

Don Ferdinand left her full of hopes ; and Roderigo Santillane, who went for her father, being come to visit her, to learn how her intrigue advanced, she gave him an account of all, shewed him the subscribed blank ; and they united in returning their thanks to Heaven, for the promised re-establishment of their happiness. To lose no time, he went home to the house that Victoria had hired, not far from Don Pedro's, as I have before related, where he filled up the black Don Ferdinand had given, with a promise of marriage attested by witnesses, and dated about the same time that Victoria received this faithless man into her country-house. He was as skilful a pen-man as any in Spain, and had studied Don Ferdinand's hand so exactly well in a copy of verses of his own writing, that even Don Ferdinand himself would have been mistaken in the forgery, and thought it to have been his own hand.

Don Pedro de Sylva could not meet with the gentleman whom he sought to be informed by, about Don Ferdinand's amours, therefore left a note for him, and
so

so came back to his house ; where that same night Elvira unbofomed her secrets to her governante, and vowed, she would fooner disobey her father, than ever marry Don Ferdinand ; confessing likewise, that she had been pre-engaged to one Don Diego de Maradas a long while before, and had in all reason complied enough with her father's commands and her own duty, by putting a constraint on her inclinations, to satisfy him ; but since Heaven had ordered it so, that Ferdinand's treachery was discovered, she thought, by refusing him, she obeyed the Divine pleasure, which seemed to allot her another husband. You may imagine Victoria fortified Elvira in these good resolutions, and spoke quite contrary to Don Ferdinand's expectations. Don Diego de Maradas, said then Elvira to her, is much dissatisfied with me, for having paid this obedience to my father ; but the least inviting look from me, will, however, be sure to bring him back, was he at as great a distance from me, as Don Ferdinand is from his Lucretia. Write to him, madam, said Victoria, and I will be your messenger.

Elvira was overjoyed to find her governess so favourable to her designs ; she
com-

commanded the coach to be ready for Victoria, who immediately went away with a billet-deaux for Don Diego; and being alighted at her father Santillane's sent the coach back again, telling the coachman, she would walk the rest of the way, whither she designed to go. Honest Santillane shewed her the promise of marriage he had drawn up; and Victoria immediately wrote two little notes; one to Don Diego de Maradas; the other to Don Pedro de Sylva, her lady's father; wherein, she intreated both of them to repair to her house about business, with the direction where she dwelt, and subscribed herself Victoria Portocarrero.

Whilst these notes were carrying, Victoria strips off her black weeds, puts on very rich cloaths, and dressed her head as nicely as if she had been going to court. Don Diego de Maradas came a while after, to know what concern a lady, to whom he was a perfect stranger, could have with him. She received him very civilly; and they were scarce set down, when it was told her, that Don Pedro de Sylva was come likewise to wait upon her. She intreated Don Diego to conceal himself in her alcove, assuring him, it concerned him very much to hear the
discourse

discourse she should have with Don Pedro. He readily complied with the desire of a lady of so much beauty, and so good a mien; and Don Pedro was admitted into Victoria's chamber, without knowing her; so much had the richness of her dress changed her face, and heightened her majestic air. She desired him to place himself in a chair, whence Don Diego might easily hear all they said, and then she began in these words: I think, sir, I ought, in the first place, to inform you who I am; because, in all probability, you are impatient to know it. I am of the family of the Portocarrero's, born in the city of Toledo, where I was married at the age of sixteen, and became a widow at about six months after. My father was a knight of the order of Saint Jago, and my brothers of the order of Callatrava. Then your father, said Don Pedro, interrupting her, was my intimate friend. What you tell me rejoices me extremely; answered Victoria, for I shall have occasion for a great many friends in the affair I design to acquaint you with. After this she informed Don Pedro of all that passed between her and Don Ferdinand, and put into his hands the promise of marriage counterfeited by Santillane. He had

had no sooner read it, but she went on thus: You know, sir, what honour obliges persons of my quality to do in these cases: for, though justice should be partially denied me, yet have my friends power and credit enough to prosecute my interest to the highest. I thought, sir, it became me to let you know my pretensions, that you might put a stop to the match you had designed for your daughter. She deserves better than to be thrown away upon a faithless man; and I believe you are more discreet, than to procure for her an husband, whom another has a right to dispute with her. Was he a grandee of Spain, replied Don Pedro, I would have nothing to do with him if he was so unjust and false as you say he is: I shall therefore not only refuse him my daughter, but likewise forbid him my house. As for yourself, madam, continued he, both my friends and interest are at your service. I had notice given me before, that he was a man who pursued his pleasure, even to the hazard of his reputation; and, being of that temper, though you had no title to him, yet should he never have my daughter, for whom I hope to obtain a husband in the court of Spain.

Don

Don Pedro perceiving she had no more to say to him, took his leave of Victoria; and then she called Don Diego out of the alcove, where he had over-heard all the conversation she had with her mistress's father. This spared her the labour of repeating her story to him: she delivered Elvira's letter to him, which transported him with joy; and, lest he should be in pain to know how she came by it, she entrusted him with her metamorphosis into a duenna, knowing he was as much concerned as herself to keep it secret. Don Diego, before he left Victoria, wrote an answer to his mistress's letter, wherein the infinite joy he expressed for his revived hopes, plainly discovered the real affliction he had been in ever since he thought her lost. He then parted from the fair widow, who presently put on her governante's habit, and returned to Don Pedro's.

In the interim Don Ferdinand de Ribera was come to wait upon his mistress, and had taken his cousin Don Antonio along with him, to endeavour to falsify those aspersions, which had been charged against him by Victoria's feigned letter. Don Pedro found them with his daughter, who knew not what to answer, when they both

desired

desired no better justification, than only a due enquiry whether there ever was in Sevil such a lady as Lucretia de Monsalva. They renewed the same plea to Don Pedro, to clear Don Ferdinand; to which he answered, That if the engagement with the lady of Sevil, was an imposition, it was so much the easier to be cleared; but that he came from a lady of Toledo, named Victoria Portocarrero, to whom Don Ferdinand had promised marriage, and to whom he was still more engaged, by having been so generously assisted by her, when a meer stranger to her; which he could not deny, since she had under his hand and seal a promise of marriage; adding withall, that a person of honour ought not to court a wife at Madrid, whilst he had one already at Toledo. At these words he shewed the two cousins the promise of marriage in due form. Don Antonio knew his cousin's writing; and Don Ferdinand mistaking it, though he was confident he had never given any such, yet was quite confounded at the sight of it. Thus convinced of his guilt, after wishing the cousins a distant farewell, the father and daughter withdrew.

Don Antonio now quarrelled with Ferdinand for employing him in this treaty, when

when he had another on foot before. However, they took coach together; and Don Antonio having made him confess his unhandsome proceeding with Victoria, he reproached him a thousand times with the heinousness of the fact, and also represented to him the evil consequence that was like to attend it. He told him, he must not think of getting another wife either at Madrid or in any part of Spain, but believe himself happy if he could get off by marrying Victoria, without forfeiting his life with his honour. Victoria's brother being a person not used to put up such affronts without full satisfaction, it was Don Ferdinand's part to be silent whilst his cousin continued his reproaches. His conscience sufficiently accused him of treachery and falsehood to a lady who had so highly obliged him; but this promise of marriage, however, almost distracted him, not knowing by what strange enchantment they had made him grant it. Victoria being come back to Don Pedro's in her widow's weeds, delivered Don Diego's letter to Elvira, who told her that the two kinsmen had been there to justify themselves; but that Don Ferdinand was charged with other lewd practices than his amour with the lady of Sevil: and afterwards

afterwards related what Victoria knew better than herself: though she pretended to admire at and detest Don Ferdinand's baseness.

The same day Elvira was invited to a play at the house of one of her relations. Victoria, whose thoughts still ran upon her own affairs, hoped, if Elvira would follow her counsel, that this play might prove favourable to her design. She told her young lady, that if she had a mind to meet her lover Don Diego, there was nothing more easy, her father's house being the most convenient that could be; and that since the play was not to begin till midnight, she might go out a little earlier, and have time enough to speak with Don Diego, and after go to her relation's. Elvira, who really loved Don Diego, and had consented to marry Don Ferdinand merely out of respect to her father's commands, shewed no reluctance to what Victoria had proposed. They therefore took coach as soon as ever Don Pedro was gone to bed; and went to Victoria's house. Santillane, as master of the family, and Beatrix, who personated the mother-in-law, welcomed them very kindly. Elvira wrote a billet to Don Diego, which was delivered immediately;

Immediately ; whilst Victoria dispatched another privately to Don Ferdinand in Elvira's name, to let him know it was in his power to complete the match ; on which his extraordinary merit engaged her to adventure, as not desiring to make herself unhappy for ever by losing him, only to please a father's crabbed suspicious humour. In the same note she gave him such particular directions how to find the house, that it was impossible he should miss it. This note was carried a little while after that other from Elvira to Don Diego. Victoria wrote likewise a third, which Santillane carried himself to Don Pedro de Sylva ; by which she informed him, as a trusty governante, that his daughter, instead of going to the play, would needs stop at her father's house, and had sent for Don Ferdinand to consummate her nuptials with him ; which she believing to be contrary to his consent, thought herself obliged to give him notice of it, to the end that he might be sensible he was not at all mistaken in the good opinion he had entertained of her honesty, when he chose her for his daughter's governante. Santillane likewise told Don Pedro, that his daughter had charged him not to come thither by

any means without bringing an alguazil with him, which is an officer much resembling a commissary at Paris.

Don Pedro being then in bed, hastened to put on his cloaths in a great passion. But whilst he is dressing, and sending for a commissary, let us go back and see what they are doing at Victoria's. By good fortune the notes came safe to each of the lover's hands. Don Diego, who had received his first, came first to the assignation. Victoria met him at the door, and conducted him into a chamber, where she left him with Elvira. I will not trouble you with the relation of all the endearments that passed betwixt these two young lovers; and, if I would, Don Ferdinand's knocking at the door will not give me time to do it. Victoria lets him in herself; and, after having magnified the great service she had done him on this occasion, for which the amorous spark returned her a thousand thanks, promising he would yet do more for her than all his former promises engaged him to, she lead him into a chamber, where she desired him to stay awhile for Elvira, who was coming, and so locked him in without light; telling him, his mistress would needs have it so, but that it would
not

Not be long before he should be visible again; adding, that a young lady's modesty would not suffer her to bear, without blushing, the sight of a man for whom she had committed so bold an action. This done, Victoria, with all the haste she could, dressed herself as well and as nicely as the short time would permit. She then went into the chamber where Don Ferdinand was, who had not the least suspicion but that she was Elvira, being no less young than she, and having such perfumes about her, according to the Spanish fashion, as would have made a chamber-maid pass for a woman of quality.

In this interim, Don Pedro, the alguazil and Santillane arrived, and they entered the chamber where Elvira was in private with her lover. The happy pair were now a little surprized at this visit; and Don Pedro, blinded by the first transports of his passion, was ready to run the person through whom he took for Don Ferdinand. The commissary, however, discovering it was not he, but Don Diego, held his arm, bidding him have a care what he did; since it was not Don Ferdinand de Ribera who was with his daughter, but Don Diego de Maradas, a

person of no less quality and riches than the other. Don Pedro at this, behaved himself like a discreet gentleman, and raised his daughter, who had cast herself at his feet. He wisely considered, that if he should cross her inclination, by opposing this match, he would create both her and himself a great deal of trouble; and, besides, could not pitch upon a better son-in-law, though he had the chusing of one himself.

Santillane now desired Don Pedro, the alguazil, and all that were with them in the room, to follow him; when he led them to the chamber where Don Ferdinand was shut up with Victoria. They commanded the door to be opened in the king's name: at which command Don Ferdinand let them in; and seeing Don Pedro, attended by the commissary, told them, with a great deal of confidence, that he was with his wife Elvira de Sylva. Don Pedro answered, he was mistaken, his daughter being married to another; and as for you, added he, you cannot deny but that Victoria Portocarrero is your lawful wife. Victoria then discovered herself to her faithless gallant, who remained full of confusion. She expostulated on his ingratitude with him; to whom
his

His silence was his only plea, as well as to the commissary, who told him he could do no less than carry him to prison. In short, his remorse of conscience, and fear of imprisonment, together with Don Pedro's exhortations, who minded him of his honour and reputation, joined to Victoria's tears and beauty, nothing inferior to that of Elvira, and, above all the rest, some sparks of generosity still remaining in his heart, notwithstanding his debaucheries and youthful follies, made him at length, with reason and justice, yield to Victoria's engaging charms: he tenderly embraced her; and she was so near swooning away in his arms, that the reviving transports of his kisses could alone preserve her. Don Pedro, Don Diego and fair Elvira, shared in Victoria's happiness; and Santillane and Beatrix were ready to die for joy. Don Pedro very much commended Don Ferdinand, for thus nobly repairing the wrongs he had committed. The two young ladies embraced each other, with as great testimonies of love as if they had hugged their own husbands. Don Diego de Maradas made a thousand protestations of his obedience to his father-in-law, or he that should be so in a short time.

Don Pedro, before he went home with his daughter, made them promise, that they would all come and dine the next day at his house; where, for fifteen days together, he endeavoured, by solemn rejoicings, to dispel the thoughts of their past troubles. The alguazil was invited too, and promised to be there: Don Pedro took him along with him; and Don Ferdinand remained with Victoria, who now had as much reason to bless her good fortune, as she formerly had to curse her evil one.

C H A P. XXIII.

An unexpected misfortune, which prevented the acting of the play.

INEZILLA having recounted her novel with an admirable grace, Roquebrune was so pleased with it, that he caught up her hand, and kissed it whether she would or not. She told him in Spanish, That great men and fools had the liberty to do any thing; for which, Rancour gave her thanks in his heart. Though the Spanish lady's face began to feel the harrow of Time, yet there were
many

many fine remains of her former beauty to be seen: but had she been less handsome, her wit had made her preferable to many younger beauties; for all that heard the story agree in this; that she had made it very entertaining in a language she was yet but a novice in, being often obliged to intermix Spanish and Italian with it, to express her meaning. Stella told her, that, instead of begging an excuse for putting her to the trouble of speaking so long, she expected her thanks for giving her so fair an occasion to shew her extraordinary wit. The rest of the afternoon was spent in conversation in the garden, which was full of ladies and many citizens of note, till supper-time. They supped after the manner of Mans; that is to say, make very good cheer; which being over, every one took their places to see the play: but, how whimsical is fortune! Madam Cave and her daughter were now missing. The servants were sent to seek them; and it was above half an hour before any tidings came. At last they heard a great noise without the hall; and presently after in came Cave, with dishevelled hair, her face bloody and bruised, and crying out like a distracted creature, that her

daughter had been stolen. Her sobs and sighs so interrupted her speech, that it was a long time before she could make the company understand that a couple of strangers, being got through a back door into the garden, where she and her daughter were rehearsing their parts, one of them seized upon her, whose eyes she had almost scratched out, while two others took away her daughter by force; when the same villain who put her into that sad condition they saw, mounted on horseback, and followed his comrades, one of whom held Angelica before him. She told them likewise she had pursued them as far as she could, crying out, A rape; but finding nobody to be within hearing, she hastened back again to the house to beg their assistance. With these last words she shed such a flood of tears, as moved all the beholders with pity. Destiny got presently on the back of a horse, on which Ragotin was just then arrived from Mans (but whether or no it was the same that threw him in the morning, I cannot justly tell) many other young men mounted the horses they could lay their hands on, and rode after Destiny, who was got a good way before them. Rancour and Olive marched on foot, with

With their swords in their hands, in the rear of the horse; and Roquebrune stayed with Stella and Inezilla, who were endeavouring to comfort Cave as well as they could. Some found fault with him, for not going along with the rest, ascribing it to want of courage; but others, more favourable, have commended his discretion, for staying with the women while there was the least probability of danger.

In the mean time, the guests were reduced to change their comedy to dancing; and having no fiddlers, because they had expected a play, they tripped it about to the singing of some of the company. Poor Cave found herself so disordered, that she went to bed in one of their dressing-chambers, and Stella took as much care of her, as if she had been her own mother, nor was Inezilla less officious. The indisposed woman at length desired they would leave her to herself; whereupon, Roquebrune led the two ladies into the hall to the rest of the company; where they were scarcely sat down, before one of the house-maids came to tell Stella that Cave desired to speak with her; she therefore, promising the poet and Spanish lady to return immediately, went to her. It

is probable, that Roquebrune, if he had any wit in him, made use of that opportunity to acquaint the fair Inezilla with his necessities.

As soon as Cave saw Stella, she desired her to make the door fast, and come to her bed-side. This being complied with, the first thing she did was to weep afresh, and then laying hold of Stella's hands, she bathed them with tears, and groaned and sobbed in a most lamentable manner. Stella endeavoured to comfort her, giving her hopes that her daughter would soon be recovered again, as her ravishers were pursued by so many people. I wish she may never return, said Cave, weeping still more and more; I wish she may never be found, repeated she again, and that this was all my grief: but I must blame her most; nay, I must, and curse the hour I brought her into the world. Look here, said she, putting a paper into Stella's hands; look and satisfy yourself, what a fine companion you have had; and read in this letter the sentence of my death, and my child's infamy. Here Cave began weeping again, while Stella perused the following note; which you you may read if you think fit.

“ YOU

“YOU ought not to doubt the truth of what I have often told you, about my quality and fortune, since there is no probability that I should deceive a person, to whom I cannot recommend myself but by my sincerity. This, fair Angelica, is the only way by which I can merit your favour; and therefore you may safely promise to grant my request, which I cannot, nor shall, desire to obtain, till I have convinced you of my reality.”

As soon as she had perused the letter, Cave asked her if she knew the hand? As well as my own, replied Stella: it is Leander's, my brother's servant, who writes out all our parts. This is the traitor that will break my heart, said the poor woman; see if he has not contrived it fairly, added she, giving another letter of the same Leander's writing into madam Stella's hands; which you may read as follows, word for word.

“It rests only in you to complete my happiness, by continuing in the same resolution you were in two days since. My father's tenant, who is used to supply me with money, has sent me a hundred pistoles, and a brace of good horses, which will be more than sufficient to carry us both into England; and being there,

I am much deceived, if a father, who loves his only son more than his own life, doth not quickly condescend to grant all his desires, to make him return again."

Well, said Cave, what think you now of your companion, and your brother's servant? What think you of that girl, whom I have bred up with so much care; and that young fellow, whose wit and discretion we have so often admired? My greatest wonder is, that they were never observed to speak to one another; and that my daughter's sprightly humour seemed not in the least to incline her to love; and yet she is in love, my dearest Stella; and so desperately, that it discovers as much madness as affection. I found her this very day writing to her Leander, in such passionate expressions, that, if I had not surprized her myself, I could never have believed it. You never have heard her speak such language yet: ah! had I not torn her letters in my fury, you would have been convinced that, at sixteen, she knows as much as those who have practised coquetry all their lives. I carried her aside into the grove, whence she was taken from me, to chide her for the ill returns she had made me, for all the pains and trouble I had undergone
on

on her account. I will acquaint you with my sufferings, added she, and then judge you, whether ever any daughter was more obliged to love her mother. Stella knew not what to answer to these just complaints; and besides, it was wisdom to let her affliction take its course only. Saying if he was so fond of the daughter, why should he abuse the mother? Nay, I cannot tell, answered Cave; for one of his company, who had laid hold on me, beat me unmercifully; nay, struck me several times, after I had done struggling with him. Besides, if he be as rich as he pretends, why does he steal away my child? Cave thus continued to lament, Stella still comforting her as well as she could. The master of the house came to know how she did, and to acquaint her that there was a coach ready at her service, if she desired to return to Mans; but she begged the liberty to remain there that night, to which he readily consented. Stella stayed there also to keep her company, while some ladies of Mans took Inezilla into a coach with them, she being unwilling to stay longer from her husband. Roquebrune, who could not civilly leave the two actresses, was very sorry he could not wait upon
Inezilla;

Inezilla ; but we cannot have every thing we desire in this world, therefore he must be contented.

C H A P. XXIV.

And that's all.

THE radiant sun shone perpendicularly upon our Antipodes, and lent no more light to his sister than she had need of to guide her steps in a very dark night. A profound silence overspread all the earth, unless where critics, owls, or serenading fools are found. In short, all nature lay hushed in sleep (or, at least, all nature ought to have been asleep) except some poets, who had cramp verses to measure; some unfortunate lovers, who anticipated their own hell; and all other animals both rational and irrational, who had that night any thing else to do. It were needless to tell you, Destiny was one of those that did not sleep, no more than the ravishers of Angelica, whom he pursued as fast as he could gallop, though his way was often obscured by the officious clouds, which robbed the earth of the feeble light of the moon.

moon. Destiny had a tender love for Mrs. Cave, both because she deserved it, and because he was secure of her affections; nor was her daughter less dear to him; for mistress Stella being obliged to continue on the stage, he could not have found in all the strolling companies throughout the kingdom, two women more virtuous than they, and fitter for her companions. Not but that some of their profession are virtuous; yet, according to the general opinion of the world, who, perhaps, however, may be mistaken, they have less of virtue than of paint or old embroidery. But to go on with our proper business: our generous stroller galloped after those ravishers, with more swiftness and animosity, than the Lapythæ did after the Centaurs. He first went through a long walk, into which opened the garden-door, from whence Angelica had been carried away; and having galloped awhile, struck at a venture into a little dirty lane. This lane was full of wheel-tracks and stones, and though it was moon-shine, yet the darkness was such, that Destiny could not persuade his steed to go faster than a broken pace. He was inwardly cursing this crabbed way, when he felt either a man or a devil

devil leaping on horseback behind him, and clasping his hands about his neck. Destiny was terribly frightened, and his horse so much startled, that he had certainly thrown his rider, had not the phantom who invested him within his arms, kept him firm on the saddle. His horse run away with him, like a horse in a fright, while Destiny continued to spur, not knowing what he did, amazed to feel two naked arms about his neck, and just at his cheek a cold face, which breathed time to the cadence of their motion. The race proved long, as the lane was not a short one : at last, at the entrance upon a heath, the horse abated his impetuous course, and Destiny his fear ; for custom brings us by degrees to bear with the most frightful things. The moon now shone with a clearer light, on purpose to let him see, that he had a large man stark naked behind him, and a face next to his, as frightful as the devil. He did not ask who he was, (whether out of good manners or not I cannot tell) but still kept his horse on a gallop, though by this time he too began to breathe short and thick ; but when it was least expected, the hind rider dropped off on the ground, and fell a laughing.

laughing. Destiny put on his horse full fast, and looking behind him, saw this phantom running as fast as he could towards the place from whence he came. Destiny confessed since, that no man could be more frightened than he was at that time. About a hundred steps farther, he came to a great road, that led him to a hamlet, where he found all the dogs awake, which made him think, that those he pursued might have gone that way. In order to be informed, he did all he could to rouse the inhabitants of three or four houses that stood on the road, but could not prevail; nay, he was insulted and barked at by the dogs to boot. At length, hearing a child cry in the last house he met with, he caused the door to be opened with severe threats, and there learnt of a woman, trembling in her smock, that some troopers had gone through their town just before, carrying with them a lady who wept like a child, and that they had much ado to still her noise. He told the same woman the adventure he had with the naked man; and she informed him, that he was a peasant of their village who was run mad, and roved up and down. However, what this woman told him about those troopers
who

who went through that town, encouraged him to go farther, and make him request his steed to mend his pace. I will not recount how often he stumbled, and was frightened at his own shadow: it is enough to inform you, that Destiny lost his way through a wood, and, riding sometimes in the dark, and sometimes in the moon-shine, at last met with break of day near a country farm, where he thought fit to let his horse feed, and where we will leave him for the present.

C H A P. XXV.

Of the Boots.

WHILST Destiny was pursuing out his way in the dark, in chase of those that had stolen Angelica, Rancour, and Olive, who did not take her rape so much to heart, run not quite so fast as he; and besides, as they were on foot, it therefore could not be expected that they could go far; wherefore, having found in the next village an inn still open, they went in there and asked for a bed. The house being full, they were shewn up into a room, where a person lay, (either a gentleman.

gentleman or plebeian, I can't tell which) who had supped in the inn; and being upon business which required haste, but which never came to my knowledge, intended to be gone by break of day. The arrival of our strollers did not favour his design of getting betimes on horseback; for they waked him out of his first sleep, for which, perhaps, he cursed them in his heart: yet the sight of two men that looked something like gentlemen, was undoubtedly the reason why he did not complain aloud. Rancour, whose behaviour was tolerably genteel, first begged his pardon for their interrupting his repose, and then asked him from whence he came. He told him from Anjou, and was going to Normandy, about business that required haste. Rancour went on with his questions while he was undressing himself, and the sheets airing; but as they were all impertinent, and of no benefit to either, especially the poor man whom he had waked, he was desired to forbear, and suffer him to go to sleep. Rancour begged his pardon heartily, and, at the same time, self-love banishing the love of his neighbour out of his breast, he resolved to appropriate to his use a pair of new boots, which the
ostler's

ostler's boy had brought into the room, after having cleaned them. Olive, who at that time had only a mind to sleep, went into bed, whilst Rancour set by the fire, not so much to see the faggot they had lighted burnt out, as to satisfy his noble ambition, of having a new pair of boots. As soon therefore as he thought the man whom he was about to rob, was fast asleep, he took his boots, not forgetting his shirts, which stood at the bed's-foot; and having put them on without stockings, went thus booted and spurred into bed to Olive. It is probable he lay as near the bed-side as he could, lest his armed legs might touch the naked ones of his bed-fellow, who would, in such case, undoubtedly have raised a noise about this new way of lying betwixt sheets, and by that means make his plot miscarry. The remaining part of the night was pretty quiet: Rancour slept, or at least dissimulated sleep. The cocks crew; day came, and the man who lay in the same room, having ordered a fire to be kindled, rose and began to dress. When he went to put on his boots, a maid offered him Rancour's old ones, which he flung down with contempt: the maid obstinately maintained they were his; whereupon he fell

fell into a great passion, and made a devilish noise. The inn-keeper came up upon this occasion, and swore, upon the faith of an honest host, that there were no other boots besides his, not only in his house, but also in all the village, the parson himself never going on horseback. Upon this he began to entertain him with the good qualities of the parson, and to tell him how he came by his living, and how long he had been in possession of it. The inn-keeper's idle talk made the traveller lose all patience. In the meantime Rancour and Olive, who had waked at the noise, took cognizance of the matter; Rancour exaggerated the enormity and heinousness of the fact, and told the inn-keeper, it was a very bad affair. I care no more for a pair of new boots, than for an old pair of shoes, said the poor bootless man to Rancour, were it not that I am upon business of great importance, for a man of quality, whom I would chuse to serve before my own father; and if I could buy other boots, I'd give any price for them, were they never so bad. Rancour, who sat up in the bed, shrugged up now and then his shoulders, and answered him nothing, keeping his eyes still fixed on the inn-keeper

keeper, his maid, and the wretch that lost them. The poor man in the meantime began to fret like a madman, and perhaps designed to hang himself, when Rancour, out of an unexampled and unwonted generosity, cried aloud, thrusting himself into the bed, like one who was almost dead for want of sleep, Zounds, sir, don't keep such a noise about your boots, but rather take mine, so you will but let us sleep, as we did you last night. The unfortunate man, who now ceased to be so since he had found a pair of boots, had much ado to believe his own ears. He mustered up a deal of nonsense to return thanks, and uttered them so passionately, that Rancour feared lest he should come at last and embrace him. He therefore cried out in a great passion, swearing most heartily, Zounds, sir, what a troublesome fellow you are, both when you lose your boots, and when you thank those that furnish you again. Once more, take mine in God's name; and all I ask for them, is only that you would let me sleep, or else give me my boots again, and then make as much noise as you please. He began to open his mouth in order to reply, when Rancour cried out, Good God! let me sleep, or let me have

have my boots, one or the other. The inn-keeper, who by this time had a great respect for Rancour, from his imperious way of speaking, thrust his guest out of the chamber, well knowing that he would have the last word, like one who was highly thankful for a pair of boots so generously bestowed: however, he was obliged to leave the room, and go into the kitchen to put on his boots, when Rancour began to sleep with more tranquility than he had done in the night, his sleepy faculty not being now disturbed, either by his wakeful desire of stealing a pair of boots, or the fear of being taken in the fact. As for Olive, who had made a better use of his time, he got up early, called for some wine, and fell a drinking, which was the best thing he could do. Rancour slept till eleven, and, as he was dressing, Ragotin happened to come into the room. He had been that morning visiting the actresses at their toilet, and Stella having told him she had but little reason to think him one of their friends, since he did not go after her companion as well as the rest, he promised not to return to Mans till he had learned news of her: but not finding a horse, either for love or money, he could
never

never have kept his promise, had not a miller lent him his mule, which he mounted without boots, and so arrived (as I said before) at the village where the two strollers had lain. Rancour had a strange ready wit; for he no sooner saw Ragotin in shoes, but he thought fortune had favoured him with an opportunity of concealing his theft, which he was before much in pain to do. Wherefore he presently desired him to lend him his shoes, and to take his boots, which, being new, hurt one of his feet. Ragotin accepted his proposal with much joy, for as he rid along, the tongue of the stirrup-buckle had torn his stockings, which made him heartily to wish for a pair of boots. Now, to acknowledge the favour in some measure, he paid for the player's dinner, as well as his own and his mule's. And because since his late fall (when the carabine went off betwixt his legs) he had made an oath never to bestride again the back of any saddle-beast, without first taking care of his safety, he therefore made use of a block; yet, with all this precaution, he had much ado to get into the pack-saddle. His brain was too mercurial to be judicious; a sign of which was his turning up the tops of his boots to his waist, which hindered

hindered him from having the free use of his limbs, which naturally were none of the most vigorous. However, Ragotin being mounted, and the strollers on foot, they set forwards on their journey, and followed the next road they came to. As they were going along, Ragotin opened his mind to the strollers, and told them his design of turning player, and acting in their company; protesting that though he did not doubt in a short time he should prove the best actor in the kingdom, yet he did not expect any profit from his profession; but what he did was only out of curiosity, and to let the world know, he was fit for any thing he had a mind to undertake. Rancour and Olive fortified him in his noble design, and, what with commending and encouraging him, they put him at last into so good a humour, that from his high station, he began to repeat verses out of Theophilus's Pyramus and Thisbe. Certain peasants who attended a loaded cart, and were going the same way, hearing him speak with the emphasis of an enthusiast, thought he was preaching; and while he rehearsed his heroics, they walked cap in hand before him, respecting him like a high-way preacher.

C H A P. XXVI.

The history of Mrs. Cave.

THE two women-strollers, whom we left in the house from whence Angelica had been stolen, had no better a night's rest than Destiny. Stella went into the same bed with Mrs. Cave; both not to leave her alone in her despair, and to endeavour by gentle persuasions to alleviate her affliction. At last, finding so just a grief did not want reasons to defend itself, she used no arguments to oppose it; only, to make a diversion, began to complain of her hard fate, as much as her bed-fellow did of her's; and thus cunningly engaged her to relate her adventures, the more easily, because at that juncture the poor woman would not allow any body to be more unfortunate than herself. She therefore dried those tears that trickled down her cheeks in abundance, and, fetching a deep sigh, thus began to tell her story. I was born a player; the daughter of one whom I never heard had any other relations but players. My mother was daughter to a merchant of Marseilles, who had bestowed her in

2

marriage

marriage on my father, as a recompence for venturing his life to defend him against a gally-officer (as much in love with my mother, as he was hated by her) who had attacked him to his disadvantage. This was an extraordinary fortune to my father; for without being put to the trouble of suing and wooing, he married a wife, young, beautiful, and richer than a stroller could ever pretend to. His father-in-law endeavoured to persuade him to leave his profession; and betake himself to the business of a merchant, as the more profitable and creditable employment of the two. But my mother, who was a great lover of plays, hindered him from leaving the stage; though, to give him his due, he was inclined to follow his wife's father's advice, as one that knew much better than she, that a player's life is not so happy as it appears to be. My father left Marseilles soon after his marriage, and carried away my mother to make her first campaign, she being more impatient than he; so that in a little time, he made her an excellent player. She proved with child the first year of their marriage, and was brought to bed of me behind the scenes: a year after I had a brother whom I loved dearly, and

by whom I was much beloved. Our company was made up of our family, and three other players, one of which had a wife who acted under parts. Upon a holiday, going through a small town in Perigord, my mother, the other player and I on the cart that carried our baggage, and our men on foot to guard us, our little caravan was on the sudden attacked by seven or eight ugly fellows, so very drunk, that meaning only to fright us with shooting off a gun, I felt their shot all over me, and my mother received a dangerous wound in the arm. They seized my father and two of his companions, before they were in a posture to defend themselves, and beat them unmercifully. My brother, and the youngest of our men fled away, and ever since I could never hear of my brother. The inhabitants of the town joined with those that had offered us this outrageous violence, and caused our cart to go back. This eager mob ran fiercely, like people who have got a great booty, and are willing to secure it, and made such a noise that they did not hear one another speak. After an hour's march, they carried us into a castle, which we had no sooner entered, but we heard several people

people cry out with great joy, that the gipsies were taken; whereby, we found their mistake, which gave us not a little comfort. The mare that drew our cart fell down dead with fatigue, having been hard put to it, and soundly beaten. The person to whom the mare belonged, and of whom the company had hired her, fell a roaring after as lamentable a manner as if her husband had been dying: at the same time my mother felt such a violent pain in her arm, that she fainted away, while my cries drowned those that were exerted upon account of the mare. The noise we made, together with the hallooing of the rude rabble, and of the drunken fellows who brought us thither, caused the lord of the castle to come out of a parlour, attended by four or five ill-looking men in red cloaths. His first question was, Where, where are the thieving gipsies? Which put us in a terrible fright; but seeing none but fair faces among us, he then asked my father who he was; and had no sooner heard that we were a wretched company of players, but with an impetuous passion, at which we all wondered, and swearing after as furious a manner as ever I heard a man, he charged with his sword those that had

seized us, and caused them to disappear in a moment, some wounded, and the rest in a terrible fright. The mob being thus dispers'd, he commanded my father and his companions to be unbound, the women to be carried into a room, and our goods to be laid up safe. Some chamber-maids came to wait upon us, and got a bed ready for my mother, who found herself very ill of the wound in her arm. Soon after, a man that looked like a steward, came to express his master's concern for the rude usage we had received. He told us, that the scoundrels who had made so unlucky a mistake, sneaked away, most of them soundly beaten, or lame, and that a surgeon had been sent for from the next town to dress my mother's arm; afterwards he asked us very earnestly, whether they had taken any thing from us, and advised us to view our goods, and see if there was any thing wanting. At night they brought us our supper into our room; the surgeon came, my mother's wound was dressed, and she went to bed in a violent fever. The next day the lord of the castle sent for the players, enquired of them how my mother did, and told them he would not suffer her to go out of his house before she

he was perfectly recovered. He was so obliging as to send men up and down the country to enquire after my brother and the young player with whom he fled away, but they could not be found; which misfortune increased my mother's distemper. A physician and a surgeon (more skilful than he who dressed her wound first) were sent for from a neighbouring town, and in a short time our good usage in the castle made us forget the violence we had suffered. The lord at whose house we were entertained, was a very rich man, more feared than loved through all the country; as violent in all his actions as a governor of a frontier town, and one who had the reputation of being as brave as Hercules. His name was the baron de Sigognac: at this present he can be no less than a marquis, but in those days he was only a petty tyrant of Perigord. A company of gipsies who had lain in his lordship's barn, stole away some horses out of a park where he kept mares for breed, at a league distance from his castle; and the men that were sent to pursue them, mistook us for them, to our cost. My mother being now perfectly well, my father and his companions, to express their gratitude for

their kind entertainment, as far as poor strollers were able, offered to act in the castle as long as the baron de Sigognac should desire it. An over-grown page, at least four and twenty years old, who was undoubtedly the master of all the pages in the kingdom, and a sort of gentleman-waiter, studied the parts of my brother, and of the player with whom he ran away. And now busy fame proclaimed through all the country, that a company of strollers were to act a play at the baron de Sigognac's: abundance of Perigordine gentry were invited to the show; and when the page was perfect in his part, which he found so difficult to learn, that they were obliged to cut and reduce it to two lines, we acted Garne's Roger and Bradamante. The assembly was very fine, the room well lighted, the stage convenient, and the scenes adapted to the subject. We all endeavoured to do our best, and we acted with general applause. My mother, in the habit of an Amazon, appeared as beautiful as an angel; and, though her late indisposition made her look a little pale, yet the brightness of her complexion obscured all the lights in the room. Though I have great reason to be very melancholly, yet cannot

not I forbear laughing whenever I think how ridiculously the page acted his part; neither must my ill humour rob you of this pleasing passage: perhaps you may not find it such; but I can assure you, it made all the company laugh heartily, and I have laughed at it an hundred times since; but whether it was laughable, or because I am one of those who laugh at a very small matter, I shan't pretend to determine. He acted the duke of Aymon's page, and had but two lines to speak in all the play; when the old man reprimanded his daughter Bradamante for refusing to marry the emperor's son, (because she was in love with Rogero) the page says to his master,

*Come in, my lord, and let us leave the street,
I see you seem to totter on your F E E T.*

Our page, however, though his part was easy enough to remember, yet murdered the second verse, and said very awkwardly, and trembling like a malefactor,

*Come in, my lord, and let us leave the street,
I see you seem to totter on your L E G S.*

This false rhyme surprized every body; he that acted Aymon's part burst out a laughing, and was no longer able to re-

present an angry old man. All the audience laughed as well as he; and I myself, who was then peeping through the hangings to see and be seen, laughed also to such a degree that I was ready to drop down. The master of the house, who was one of those melancholy persons who laugh but seldom, and never at a small matter, found his page's want of memory and his awkward way of reciting verses, so laughable a subject, that he endangered his bursting by endeavouring to preserve his gravity; but at last he was obliged to laugh as well as the rest; and his men have told us since, that they never knew him so well pleased in all their lives. Now, as he had great authority in that country, there was not one person of the whole audience but laughed as much as he, or perhaps more, out of complaisance, or a natural inclination.

But I am afraid, lest I have imitated those who preface a tale with, I'll tell you a story that will make you die with laughing; but seldom or ever are as good as their words: for I must confess I raised your expectation too high about the simplicity of my page. Not at all, answered Stella, I have found it such as you made me expect it.; it is true, the
thing

thing might have seemed more ridiculous to those that saw it, than it will to such as shall only hear it related; but the awkwardness of the poor page must have contributed much to the cause of your mirth; and, besides, the time, the place, and the natural inclination we have to laugh for company's sake, are all advantages it cannot have now. Cave made no farther apology, but resumed her story where she had left off.

After, continued she, that both the actors and the audience had laughed as much as their risible faculties would give them leave, the baron de Sigognac ordered his page to come again on the stage, in order to mend his fault, or rather to make new sport for the company: but the page (the greatest looby ever I saw) refused to obey the positive commands of the severest master in the world. The baron took his denial as he was prompted by his hasty temper; that is to say, very ill; and his resentment, which ought to have been small, had he been ruled by reason, proved afterwards the fatal cause of the greatest misfortune that could befall us. Our tragedy was honoured with the applause of the whole audience; and the farce was

still better received than the tragedy ; as generally happens every where except in Paris. The baron de Sigognac, and the rest of the gentlemen his neighbours, were so well pleased with it, that they desired to see us act again. All the gentlemen clubbed to make a present to our company, every one according to his generosity; the baron shewed them the way, and the play was given out for the next holiday. We played a whole month before these Perigordine gentry; during which time we were treated and caressed both by men and women; and besides, our company was presented with some change of cloaths in very tolerable condition. The baron entertained us at his own table; his servants were extremely officious in waiting upon us, and often told us how much they were obliged to us for their master's good humour, whom they found quite altered since plays had civilized his rough manners. The page alone looked upon us as people that had blasted his reputation for ever; and the line he had spoiled, and which every body in the house, even to the very scullion, repeated to him often in raillery, was a cruel stab to him, for which he at last resolved to be revenged upon some one or other of our company. Upon

Upon a certain day, when the baron de Sigognac had assembled his neighbours and tenants, to rid his woods of a great number of wolves that harboured there, and by which the country was very much annoyed; my father and his fellow-strollers accompanied him each with a gun, as did also his servants. The unlucky page went along with them, and having found the opportunity he looked for, to put his ill design against us in execution, he no sooner espied my father and his comrades separated from the rest, and giving one another powder and shot to load their guns, but he presented his piece at them from behind a tree, and shot my unhappy father with two bullets: his comrades were so busy in supporting him, that they never thought at first to pursue the murderer, who fled from his service and country two days after, on hearing that my father was dead of his wounds. My mother grieved at her loss to such a degree, that it almost broke her heart; she fell sick again, and I was as much afflicted as it was possible for a girl of my years. My mother's illness proving a lingering disease, the men and women that belonged to our company, took their leaves of the baron de Sigognac, and

and went to seek their fortune with some other strollers. My mother lay sick for above two months, but at last recovered; having, during that time, received such tokens of generosity and kindness from the baron de Sigognac, as were little to be expected from a man who was stigmatized for being the greatest tyrant that ever made himself feared in a country where each arbitrary fool of fortune presumes to domineer. His servants, who never found any humanity or civility in him before, wondered to see him converse with us, after the most kind and obliging manner in the world. One might have thought he was in love with my mother, but that he seldom spoke to her, and never came into our room (where we used to take our meals) after my father's death, and only sent often to know how she did: however, the country people talking as if my mother had indulged him in too many familiarities, she, at length, considered it as incompatible with decency to stay any longer in the house of a person of his quality, and resolved upon leaving it and retiring to her father's at Marseilles. She therefore acquainted the baron with her intentions; returned him thanks for all his kind usage to us, and
desired

desired him to add one favour more to those we had already received ; which was, to lend us saddle-horses for herself and me, till we came to a certain town ; and a cart to carry our little baggage, which she designed to sell to the first man that would give her any thing for it. The baron was much surprized at my mother's request ; nor was she in a less surprize than he, on finding he would neither grant or deny it.

The next day the curate of one of the churches within his lordship's presentation, came to visit us in our chamber, accompanied by his niece, a good-natured and agreeable girl, with whom I was intimately acquainted. While we were walking in the garden of the castle, her uncle was alone with my mother : the curate had a long conversation with her, and did not leave her till supper-time. When I came back, I found my mother melancholly and full of thought ; I asked her three or four times what was the matter ; but could get no answer from her, only she fell a weeping, and so I wept for company, without knowing why I did so. At last she bid me shut the chamber-door, and then told me (weeping still more than before) that the curate
had

had informed her, that the baron de Sigognac was desperately in love with her, and assured her besides, that he had so great a respect for her, that he never durst declare (either by himself or others) his passion for her, without offering her marriage at the same time. Here she stopped, being almost suffocated with sighs and sobs: I asked her once again, Wat ail'd her? What! daughter, said she to me, have I not said enough to let you understand that I am the most wretched woman in the world? I told her I did not think it so great a misfortune for a player to become a lady of quality. Alas! dear child, said she, you talk like a young girl that knows nothing of the world. What (added she) if he should deceive the curate in order to deceive me? If he does not design to marry me, as he would persuade me he does, have I not reason to fear all manner of violence, from a man so much a slave to his passions? And if he really designs to marry me, and I consent to it, what woman in the world can be more miserable than myself when his bestial passion is once palled? How great is his hatred like to prove, if ever he should repent loving me? No, no, daughter continued she, fortune is not.

not so favourable as thou imaginest: nay, rather, she designs to aggravate my load of woe; for after having deprived me of a husband whom I loved, and by whom I was beloved, she now would force one upon me, who perhaps will hate me, and oblige me to hate him too. Her grief, which I thought unreasonable, increased to such degree, that she was like to be stifled with it, whilst I helped her to undress herself. I comforted her as well as I could, and endeavoured to abate her affliction, with all the arguments a girl of my years was able to frame; not forgetting to tell her, that the obliging and respectful behaviour which the roughest of all men had ever shewn in conversing with us, seemed to be a good omen; especially that of his want of assurance in discovering his passion to a woman, whose profession is rather apt to embolden a man in his addresses, than inspire him with awful respect. My mother suffered me to speak all I thought fit, and went to bed very much afflicted, but cherished her grief all night long, instead of sleeping. I also endeavoured, for the sake of good manners, to resist sleep; but at last was obliged to yield to the pleasing assuager of sorrow. My mother got up
early

early in the morning, and when I awoke I found her already dressed, and tolerably well composed. I was in great pain to know what resolution she had taken; for, to tell you truth, I flattered myself with my mother's future greatness, in case the baron was sincere and honourable in his addresses, and my mother willing to grant his suit. The thoughts of hearing my mother called my lady baroness, filled my mind with delight, and ambition began to inflame my youthful breast.

Mrs. Cave was thus recounting her story, and Stella listening to her with great attention, when they heard somebody tread in their chamber; which startled them the more, as they remembered to have fastened the door with the bolt. The noise continued, and Cave demanded Who is there? No answer was made; but a moment after, Cave saw at the bed's-foot (the curtains being open) the figure of a person whom she heard sigh, and who, leaning on the bed, rested on her feet. She sat up, to view the thing nearer which had frightened her; and being fully resolved to speak to it, she reached her head out of the bed; on which it immediately disappeared. Though company often creates courage, yet sometimes
our

our fears are not decreased by being shared with another. Cave was frightened because she had seen nothing, and Stella because she saw her companion afraid. They both thrust themselves into the bed, covered their heads with the bed-cloaths, and lay close, not daring almost to speak to each other for fear. At last Cave told Stella, that her poor daughter must be dead, and that it was her ghost which came to sigh by her. Stella was, perhaps, going to reply, when they heard the thing walk again in the room; so she prudently changed her design, and thrust herself deeper into the bed than she had done before; but Cave, emboldened by the thought that it was her daughter's ghost, sat up again in the bed, and seeing the same thing appear, sighing as before, and leaning on her feet, reached out her hand and felt a very rough one; which occasioned her hideously to shriek, and tumble down with the fright. At the same time they heard a barking in the room, as when a dog is afraid of any thing that he meets in the night. Cave recovered once more, took courage enough to look at it, and then saw a great greyhound that barked at her. She threatened him with a loud voice, at which he retired

retired barking towards the corner of the room, where he vanished out of sight. The courageous actress rose out of her bed, and by the moon-shine which came through the window, discovered in that corner of the room, where the phantom and the greyhound had disappeared, a little door which opened unto a little pair of back-stairs. By that she easily imagined that a grey-hound belonging to the house had crept through the door into their room; and that having a mind to lay himself on their bed, but not daring to do it without the consent of those who were in it, he had sighed like a dog; and the bed being high, as are all old beds, he had leaned his fore legs on her feet, and afterwards crept under the bed, when Cave first reached her hand out of it: however, the belief of a ghost being in the room, had so possessed Stella's imagination that it was a long time before she could persuade her there was nothing but a grey-hound. As afflicted as Cave was, she ridiculed her companion about her cowardice, and reserved the continuation of her story to another time, when they should not want sleep so much as they did then. It was now break of day, they again fell asleep, and got up about

ten

ten ; when word was brought them, that the coach which was to carry them to Mans was ready to set out as soon as they pleased.

C H A P. XXVII.

Destiny meets with Leander.

DESTINY in the mean time went from town to town, still enquiring after those he pursued, but could learn no news nor tidings of them. Thus he rambled up and down till two or three o'clock in the afternoon, when hunger and his horse's weariness obliged him to return to the great village, which he had left a while before. Here he found a pretty good inn, because it stood upon the road, and where he did not forget to ask whether they had heard of a company of horsemen who stole a young woman. There is a gentleman above who can give you an account of them, said the surgeon of that village, who happened to be there ; for, added he, I believe he has been a quarrelling with them, and has got many a wound for his pains. I just now applied to him an anodyne and
resolutive

resolutive cataplasme on a livid tumour he has on the vertebræ of the neck, and dressed a great cut he received in the occiput. I would have let him bleed, because he is full of contusions, but he would not let me though he has great occasion for it. He must needs have got a heavy fall, or else have been beaten unmercifully. This country surgeon took such delight in mustering the learned terms of his art, that though Destiny was gone from him, and nobody left to give him the hearing, yet went he still on with his discourse till he was fetched away to bleed a woman, who was dying of an apoplexy.

In the mean time Destiny went up to the person's chamber of whom the surgeon had spoke, where he found a young man well dressed, with his head bound, and lying upon a bed to take his rest. He was meditating a compliment to excuse his intruding into his chamber, before he knew whether he was willing to admit of his visit; but was not a little surprized when, at the first words he spoke, the other rose from his bed, and ran to embrace him, discovering himself to be his servant Leander, who was gone from him without taking leave, four or five days before, and whom Cave had suspected to be

be the ravisher of her daughter. Destiny was now at a stand, not knowing in what sort of tone to accost him, because of his resemblance to a gentleman, both in person and dress. Whilst he was thus viewing him, Leander had time to compose himself, for he seemed something disordered at first: I am ashamed (said he to Destiny) I dealt not so frankly and sincerely with you, as I should have done with one whom I value so much; but you must excuse an unexperienced young man, who, before he was well acquainted with you, thought you to be of the same make, as those of your profession generally are; and who therefore did not dare to entrust you with a secret, on which depended the happiness of his life. Destiny told him, he could not imagine in what particular he had disturbed him, so desired he would let him know it. I have a great many things besides to tell you, if you are not already acquainted with them, answered Leander; but first of all let me know what brought you hither. Destiny told him how Angelica had been stolen; that he had pursued her ravishers; and was informed as he came into the inn, that he met with one in him, who could give an account of them. It is true I met with them, replied
Leander

Leander with a sigh, and I did as much against them, as a single man could do against many; but my sword happening to break in the body of the first man I wounded, I could neither rescue Mrs. Angelica, nor die in her defence, though I was fully resolved to do one. They left me in the condition you see me; and, thinking they had killed me with a back-stroke they gave me on the head, (but which, however, only stunned me for a while) they went on their way in great haste. This is all I know of Mrs. Angelica, but we shall hear more anon from a servant of mine, who is to meet me here, and whom I sent to follow them at a distance, after he had helped me to mount my horse, which they left me, because, I suppose, they did not think him worth stealing. Destiny asked him, why he went from him without giving him warning, from whence he came, and who he was; not doubting but that he concealed his name and condition from him. Leander confessed there was reason for his suspicion; and having laid himself down, because the blows he had received tortured him most painfully, whilst Destiny sat at the bed's-foot, Leander recounted to him what you may read in the following chapter.

C H A P. XXVIII.

The history of Leander.

I AM the son of a gentleman very well known in the province where I was born, and hope one day to be worth at least four thousand crowns a year, provided my father be at last pleased to die ; for though it is now fourscore years since he has plagued all those who have any dependence on him, yet he is so well in health that I have more reason to fear he will never die, than to hope I shall inherit three fine lordships, which make up his estate. He designed to make me a counsellor in the parliament of Brittany, though against my inclination, and for that purpose sent me to school betimes. I was at the college of La Fleche when your company came to act there ; there I saw Mrs. Angelica, and was inspired with such a passion for her, that I could attend to nothing else. Nay, I went farther ; for I had the assurance to inform her of my love, at which she was not much offended ; I writ to her, she received my letter, and did not look more coldly upon me the next time I saw her

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than

than before. After this Mrs. Cave's illness confining her to her chamber, whilst you were at La Flèche, her daughter and I had frequent opportunities of conversing, which her mother would have prevented had she been well; for you know how severe and reserved she is for a woman of her profession, which seems to dispense with its followers not being over nice or scrupulous. From the first moment I fell in love, I never went to school more, nor missed a play. The Jesuits endeavoured to bring me back to my duty; but having chosen the most charming mistress in the world, I refused to obey the most troublesome masters in the universe. Your servant, you may remember, was killed at the play-house door, by the scholars of Brittany, who made that year a great disturbance at La Fleche, because they were very numerous, and wine happened to be cheap; which was in some measure the reason why you went from La Fleche to Angiers. I did not, however, take my leave of Angelica, because her mother was always with her; all I could do, was to appear before her as she went away, with despair in my face, and tears in my eyes. A pitying melancholly look which she cast
on

on me, was like to break my heart; I locked myself up in my room, wept bitterly the remaining part of the day, and all the night; but the very next morning, changing cloaths with my man, (who was about my size) I left him at La Fleche to sell my school-boys equipage, and gave him a letter for a tenant of my father's, who supplies me with money whenever I ask for it, with orders to come to me at Angiers.

I began my journey thither after you, and overtook you at Duretail, where several gentlemen, who were then hunting a stag, obliged you to stay seven or eight days. There I offered my service to you, and you entertained me as your man, either because you were loth to be without me, or because my face and mien, which you seemed to like, had engaged you to hire me. My hair, which I had cut very short, hindered me from being known again by those who had often seen me with Angelica: besides, my servant's old coat, which I had put on to disguise myself, made me look like quite different from what I appeared to be when dressed in my own cloaths, which were finer than a school-boy's generally are. However, my mistress Angelica knew me at first

fight, and has owned to me since, that she did not doubt, but my passion was very violent for her, since I could abandon all to follow her. She had the generosity to dissuade me from it; advised me to recall my wandering reason, and inflicted such rigours as would be sufficient to cool a man less amorous than myself; but by my constant love, I insensibly engaged her to love me as much as I did her: and, as you had the soul of a man of quality, (of such a one I mean as is truly noble) it was not long before you found out that I was not of the temper of a servant; I soon gained your favour, and the esteem of all the gentlemen of your company; nay, even Rancour did not hate me, though he had the character of loving nobody.

I shall not waste my time in relating all the fine things which two persons equally in love might say to one another, as often as they happened to come together; you know that sufficiently from your own experience. I will only tell you, that Mrs. Cave suspecting our private correspondence, or rather, having certain proofs of it, charged her daughter never to speak to me more. Angelica, however, did not obey her; but her mother having sur-
prized

prized her while writing to me, used her so roughly, both in public and private, that I afterwards found no great difficulty in acquiring her consent to be carried off. I am not afraid to make this plain confession to you, because I know you to be as generous as any man, and at least as amorous as myself. Destiny blushed at these words of Leander; who went on with his discourse, and told him, that he had left the company in order to put his design in execution; that one of his father's tenants had promised to furnish him with a sum of money, and that he hoped to receive more at St. Malos, from a merchant's son, his intimate friend, who was lately come to his estate, by the death of his parents. He added, that, by the assistance of his friend, he did not doubt of a possibility to get over into England, and from thence of making peace with his father, without exposing to his anger Angelica or her mother, whom, in all probability, he would otherwise prosecute, with all the advantage that a man of wealth and quality could have over two poor players.

Destiny made Leander sensible, that, because of his youth and quality, his father would certainly have indicted Mrs.

Cave for a rape, in case he had not thought of this way to prevent it. He did not endeavour to make him forget his mistress; for he was sensible, that persons in love, were not capable of following any counsel but what was suggested by their passion; and, in a word, are more to be pitied than blamed; but he highly disapproved his design of going over into England; and represented to him, what people might think of two young strangers in a foreign country; the hazards and fatigues of a sea-voyage; the difficulty of being supplied with money, in case he should want; and, lastly, the attempts to which they would be exposed by Angelica's beauty and his own inexperience. Leander did not endeavour to defend a bad cause: he once more asked Destiny's pardon, for having concealed himself so long; and Destiny, in return, promised to use all his interest with Mrs. Cave, in recommending him to her favour. Moreover, Destiny told him, that if he was fully resolved never to marry any woman but Angelica, he ought not to leave their company; adding, that, in the mean time, his father might die, or his passion abate, or, perhaps, be quite extinguished—Oh! never, never, cried Leander.

Leander. Well then, said Destiny, to secure your mistress's heart, your best way is never to lose sight of her: be a player still with us, for you are not the only man that treads the stage, when he could follow a better employment: write to your father; make him believe you are in the army, and try to get money from him; in the mean time I will converse with you, as if you were my own brother, and by that means endeavour to make you forget the indifferent usage you received from me, whilst I was unacquainted with your quality and merit.

Leander would have thrown himself at ~~he~~ ^{been} ~~if he~~ ^{courted} ~~by~~ ^{the} violent pain he felt all ~~over~~ ^{over} ~~his~~ ^{his} body, ~~upon~~ ^{upon} account of his bruises, would have given him leave: however, he returned him thanks after so obliging a manner, and made him such hearty protestations of friendship, that from that very moment he had as great an esteem for him as one gentleman could possibly have for another. They discoursed afterwards which way they should go in search of Angelica; but a great noise interrupted their conversation, and caused Destiny to run down into the kitchen, where was transacting what you shall hear in the next chapter.

C H A P. XXIX.

A bloody fight; The death of the inn-keeper, and other memorable occurrences.

TWO men, one of which was in black like a country school-master, and the other in grey, who looked like a catch-pole, had laid hold one of another by the hair and beard, and now and then interrupted their execrations with blows. Both were indeed what their habits and looks shewed them. He in black, the school-master of the town, ^{and} ~~was~~ ^{the} ~~curate's~~ ^{curate} ~~own~~ ^{own} ~~brother~~ ^{brother} to the curate; the other, ⁱⁿ ~~his~~ ^{his} ~~own~~ ^{own} ~~brother~~ ^{brother} to the inn-keeper. This inn-keeper was then in a chamber next the kitchen, ready to give up the ghost, being sick of a violent fever, which had so disordered his senses, that he broke his head against the wall; and the wound aiding his distemper, had brought him so low, that, when his frenzy left him, he was compelled to part with life; which, perhaps, he regretted less than his ill-gotten money. For a long time he had been a soldier, and was at last come home laden with
years,

years, and so extremely light of honesty, that he might be said to have less of it than money; although he was very poor. But because women are very often caught by those very things which they ought the least to be enamoured with, his twisted hair, longer than any peasant's in town, his cursing and swearing like a true son of Mars, a bristling feather which he wore on his hat upon holidays, when the weather was fair, and a rusty long sword that flapped against the old boots he had on, although he never bestrode a horse; all these, I say, gained him the heart of an old woman that kept an inn. She had been courted by the richest tenants in the country, not so much on account of her beauty, as because she had got an estate with her first husband, by exacting upon people, and cheating in the measure both of wine and oats; yet she courageously resisted all the assaults of her lovers, till, at last, this old weather-beaten soldier triumphed over his hostess. This tavern-nymph had the least face, and the biggest belly of any woman in Mayne, though that province is remarkable for abounding in big-bellied people, and fat capons; which leaving naturalists to account

count for, let us return to this short big woman, whom I fancy before me as often as I think on her. She married our warrior without consulting her relations; and having lived to a crazy old age, and undergone great hardships with him, had, at last, the satisfaction to see him die of a broken skull, which she looked upon as a just judgment for his repeated attempts to break her's.

When Destiny came into the kitchen, the hostess and her maid were helping the old curate of the town to part the combatants, who had grappled one another like two ships in a sea-fight; but the threats of Destiny, and his magisterial way of speaking, brought about a truce which the curate's exhortations could not before effect: whereupon, the two mortal enemies let go their hold, spitting half of their bloody teeth out of their mouths, bleeding at their noses, and taring their hands full of each other's hair both from their heads and beards. The curate being an honest well-bred person, returned Destiny thanks very civilly; and Destiny, to do him farther pleasure, caused those two very persons to embrace in a friendly manner, who
a mo-

a moment before had endeavoured to strangle one another. During this reconciliation, the inn keeper ended his obscure life, without so much as giving notice of it to his friends; insomuch, that when they entered his room after the conclusion of the peace, they found there was no more to be done than to bury him. The curate prayed over the dead body, and did it very well, for he was extremely expeditious. His vicar came to relieve him; and in the mean time the widow thought it proper to roar and cry, which she did with a great deal of ostentation and vanity. The brother of the deceased, either dissembled being sorrowful, or was so in reality; and the men and women-servants performed their parts as well as he. The curate followed Destiny into his chamber, offering to serve him and Leander to the utmost of his power, and invited them to dine with him. Destiny, who had eaten nothing all that day, and used a great deal of exercise, fell to it with a greedy appetite; Leander fed more upon amorous thoughts than victuals; and the curate talked more than he eat. He told them a hundred pleasant stories about the avarice of the deceased;

deceased ; and acquainted them with the comical quarrels which this reigning passion had often caused him, both with his wife and his neighbours. Among the rest, he related an account of a journey the deceased once made to Laval with his wife : the horse that carried them both having lost two of his shoes, the soldier left his wife holding it by the bridle, at the foot of a tree, while he went back as far as Laval, to look for his horse's shoes ; however, he lost his labour whilst his wife lost her patience (for they were come two leagues from Laval) and really began to be in pain for his welfare, when she espied him coming bare-foot, with his boots and hose in his hands. She was not a little surprized at this novelty, but did not dare to ask the reason of it ; for by imitating his officers in the wars, he made himself so absolute at home, that she did not presume to contradict him, when he commanded her to pull off her stockings ; or so much as asked him why he did it ; but thought it was out of devotion. He then caused his wife to lead his horse by the bridle, whilst he walked behind and drove him. Thus the man and wife, without either shoes
or,

or stockings, and the unshod horse, after a tedious and troublesome march, came home at last, late at night, and all three very much tired. Indeed the inn-keeper and his wife were so galled and sore in the feet, that they could not walk for almost a fortnight after. He never was more pleased with any thing he had ever done; and when ever he thought on't, told his wife laughing, that, if they had not come bare-foot from Laval, they had been at a great expence for shoes, both for themselves and their horse.

Destiny and Leander took not much notice of the story, though the curate had promised a good one; but they either did not find it so pleasant as he said it was, or were not then in a humour to laugh. The curate, being a great talker, was not contented with this, but had still a mind to proceed to another; and told Destiny, that what they had heard, was nothing in comparison of what he had to tell them about the inn-keeper's preparing himself for death. It is now four or five days, continued he, since he knew he was past recovery; and yet he never was more sparing: he grudged himself all the new-laid eggs he eat during his illness;
had

had a mind to know to a farthing the charge of his burial, and even would have abated something of my fees, when I received his confession: in short, to end as he began, two hours before he died, he ordered his wife, in my hearing, to bury him in an old sheet, which he knew was somewhere about the house, and which had above a hundred holes in it. His wife represented to him how indecent a thing it would be for him to be buried in it; but he grew obstinate, and would have no other. His wife could not find in her heart to consent to it; and, because she saw him unable to beat her, maintained her opinion with more assurance than she had ever done, though it must be acknowledged, not without breaking in upon that duty which an honest wife owes her husband, whether he be kind or not. At last, she asked how he could pretend to appear in the vally of Jehosaphat in that equipage, and in what pickle he thought he should rise from the dead? The sick man fell into a passion at this, and swearing as he used to do when he was in health, Zounds, cried he, I never intend to rise again. I had as much ado to forbear laughing, as to make him understand

and that he had offended God by thus falling into a passion; and much more by what he had said to his wife, which was a piece of profaneness and impiety. He made an act of contrition for it, though somewhat against the grain, but not without a promise on our side, that he should be buried in no other sheet than what he had pitched upon. My brother, who burst out a laughing when he heard him so loudly and plainly renounce his resurrection, could not forbear laughing still, as often as it came into his mind; but this the brother of the deceased taking exceptions at, from words they advanced to blows; both equally sturdy and passionate, they laid hold of one another, and, perhaps, would have been still cuffing and fighting, if you had not parted them.

Thus the curate made an end of his relation; having all the while addressed himself to Destiny, because Leander did not give him any attention. He then took his leave of the strollers with repeated offers of service; and Destiny endeavoured to administer some drops of comfort to the afflicted Leander, and bid him hope for the best. As bruised as the poor youth was, he now and then looked out

out at the window to see if his ma
as if his looking would make him
the sooner. But when people wait
impatience for any body, the wisest
fools enough to look towards the place
from whence they expect them; which
reflection shall close this volume.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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